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THE SERMON BIBLE

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COLOSSIANS—JAMES.

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INTRODUCTION.

ON Colossians there are commentaries by Professor Agar Beet, Professor Findlay ("Pulpit Commentary"), and Dr. Maclaren ("Expositor's Bible"). Bleek's "Vorlesungen" may be consulted with advantage. Guthrie's "Christ and the Inheritance of the Saints" contains expository lectures on this Epistle.

First and Second Thessalonians have been treated by Mr. Denney ("Expositor's Bible"), Dr. Hutchison ("Expository Lectures"), R. V. Dunlop, and J. B. Sumner. There is a commentary by Bishop Ellicott.

Dr. Plummer writes on the Pastoral Epistles in the "Expositor's Bible," and there is a commentary by Mr. Alfred Rowland.

Dr. Maclaren writes on Philemon in the "Expositor's Bible."

On Hebrews there are many books. Those of Dr. A. B. Davidson ("Handbooks for Bible-classes"), Principal Edwards ("Expositor's Bible"), Delitzsch (Clark's "Foreign Theological Library"), Dr. Dale ("The Jewish Temple and the Christian Church"), Guthrie ("Heroes of Faith"), and the commentaries of Keil and Tholuck will be found helpful.

On St. James there are Dr. Plummer's work in the "Expositor's Bible" and the commentary of Mr. Mayor.

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COLOSSIANS.

REFERENCES: i. 1, 2.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xv., p. 266. i. 2. —*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. x., pp. 247, 257. i. 3-5.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. x., p. 74. i. 3-8.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. viii., p. 87.

Chap. i., vers. 4, 5.—"The love which ye have to all the saints, for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven."

CHRIST the uniting Hope of His people.

I. The Epistle to the Colossians is remarkably full of this delightful fact, the world-wide family love of the Gospel. In this epistle Paul rejoices that the Gospel had begun to come to all the world, that its blessed truth was preached "to all the creation under heaven," and that "the riches of the glory" and this secret, this mystery was made known among the heathen. He lets them know that it is the most precious possible news to him that they have faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ, and love to all the saints, because of the hope laid up for them in heaven. It is the truth that wears well and bears perpetual using, and gets brighter with use, this truth that the Gospel, with its one Lord and its one hope, tends directly to bind believing hearts in one. Many influences blind our sight to the reality and glory of the fact.

II. Now what was the hope, this hope laid up for them in heaven? It was the hope of their being presented hereafter holy, unblamable, unreprovable, before the Lord. It was in their hearts no mere perchance, no venture in the unknown, no wavering "it may be so." True, the full-blown flower was yet to come, but the plant was already rooted and growing. Christ their Hope was already their Life. He was theirs now, as well as to be theirs then; so they had the hold of a deep and lawful assurance on their coming glory.

III. Then again, it was a social hope; not solitary, but social. It was for them not only one by one, but for the happy band all together. They looked forward *together*. Their

longing eyes met upon that radiant point. They were drawn together by that glowing prospect, their final and eternal bliss, ushered in by the return of Jesus from the heavens, and bound up with Him for evermore.

H. C. G. MOULE, *Christ is All*, p. 69.

REFERENCES: i. 5.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 305; Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 276; *Ibid. Sermons*, vol. xxiv., No. 1438. i. 5, 6.—J. Edmunds, *Sixty Sermons*, p. 438; J. Irons, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 145. i. 5-7.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xv., p. 341.

Chap. i., ver. 9.—"We do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding."

MORAL thoughtfulness.

I. The state of spiritual folly is, I suppose, one of the most universal evils in the world. For the number of those who are naturally foolish is exceedingly great: of those, I mean, who understand no worldly thing well; of those who are careless about everything, carried about by every breath of opinion, without knowledge and without principle. But the term spiritual folly includes, unhappily, a great many more than these: it takes in not those only who are in the common sense of the term foolish, but a great many who are in the common sense of the term clever, and many even who are in the common sense of the term prudent, sensible, thoughtful and wise. It is but too evident that some of the ablest men who have ever lived on earth, have been in no less a degree spiritually fools. And thus it is not without truth that Christian writers have dwelt upon the insufficiency of worldly wisdom, and have warned their readers to beware, lest, while professing themselves to be wise, they should be accounted as fools in the sight of God.

II. Note the opposite to this notion, that those who are, as it were, fools in worldly matter, are wise before God. Although this is true in a certain sense, and under certain peculiar circumstances, yet taken generally, it is the very reverse of truth; and the careless and incautious language which has been used on this subject, has been often extremely mischievous. On the contrary, he who is foolish in worldly matters is likely also to be, and most commonly is, no less foolish in the things of God; and the opposite belief has arisen mainly from that strange confusion between innocence and ignorance with which many ignorant persons seem to solace themselves. He who is a fool

as regards earthly things, is much more a fool with regard to heavenly things: he who cannot raise himself to the lower height, how is he to attain to the higher? he who is without reason and conscience, how shall he be endowed with the Spirit of God?

T. ARNOLD, *Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 23.

REFERENCES: i. 9, 10.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxix., No. 1742. i. 10.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. ix., p. 65; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. ii, p. 6; J. Vaughan, *Sermons*, 12th series, p. 93; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 35. i. 11.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. v., pp. 31, 273.

Chap. i., ver. 12.—"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."

IT is the special glory of the Gospel, the foundation or the perfection of all the rest, that it first truly and distinctly, in language beyond the uncertainties of conjecture, the refinements of allegory, or even the bright colouring of hope, enlarged the prospects of men into the depths of eternity. It first clearly and authoritatively taught us that the present existence is the least and meanest portion of our inheritance, and death to the undying spirit only the birthday of immortal life. From the hour that this awful and glorious secret was revealed to the sons of men, the whole science of life was for ever changed; a new element entered into calculation that transformed all the rest. Created eternal, the soul is intended, from the instant of its birth, to breathe the air of eternity. It is at home only in its own high sphere of being; connected by a visible frame with the present world, it is itself invisible, and lives by the invisible. Through its own proper organs, and through Faith and Hope and Love Divine, it already commences with the eternal scene, where, hereafter, disburdened of its earthly fetters, it is to dwell and to rejoice everlastingly.

I. This, then, is the great truth implied in the text, that the life for eternity is already begun; that we are at, and from the very hour of our regeneration introduced into the spiritual world, a world which, though mysterious and invisible, is as real as the world of sense around us; that the Christian's life of heavenliness is the first stage of heaven itself. No thought surely can be more awakening than this; none of more urgent and immediate practical importance. Men may forget their past sins, but they cannot be ignorant of their present disposition. We are saved that we may for eternity serve God; salvation itself would be misery unaccompanied by a love for that service.

All aspirations for salvation are vain in which that love forms no element; all desire for pardon is self-contradictory if it does not include an earnest present desire for that enjoyment and service of God which are to form the sequel and the value of the pardon.

II. Heaven is our pattern, but of heaven itself we surely can know little. How then shall we regulate our lives by an unknown model? An obvious distinction solves this difficulty. The details of celestial life we cannot know. The abodes in which we are to dwell, the companions with whom we shall rejoice, the bodies—bright similitudes of Christ—which we shall wear—all these and the like, are matters beyond our limited conjecture. But then, it is not in these things that we are bound to practise the celestial life on earth. The principles of that life, the great general laws of heart and spirit that govern it—these are to be the principles and laws of this, and these are clear and indisputable. The great preparatory graces are faith, the realising power, hope, the consoling and fortifying power, and love, the uniting power, the consummation and perfection of all.

W. Archer Butler, *Sermons Doctrinal and Practical*, p. 101.

References: i. 12.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. vii., p. 221; H. J. Wilmot-Buxton, *The Life of Duty*, vol. ii., p. 206; *Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. i., p. 147; E. W. Benson, *Boy Life*, p. 361. i. 12-13.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. vi., p. 319. i. 12-20.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 484; H. Crosby, *American Pulpit of the Day*, p. 10; *Plain Sermons*, vol. ix., p. 58. i. 13.—T. Guthrie, *Christ and the Inheritance of the Saints*, pp. 60, 80, 98, etc. i. 13-16.—J. O. Dykes, *Sermons*, p. 97. i. 14.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. x., p. 80; G. Calthrop, *Words Spoken to my Friends*, p. 104. i. 15.—B. Jowett, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 323; *Ibid.*, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 307; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxix., p. 355. i. 15-17.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. vi., p. 232. i. 16.—*Ibid.*, vol. vi., p. 45. i. 16, 23.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 448.

Chap. i., ver. 18.—"That in all things He might have the pre-eminence."

I. Living as we do, far down the stream of time, when long ago the name of Christ has associated itself to all that is the most classical in literature, the most refined in art, the most exquisite in poetry, the most generous in chivalry, and the most advanced in civilisation; when the cross, no more the word of shame or the brand of ignominy, has become the banner of progress, and the crest of honour, it is very difficult for us to throw ourselves enough into the spirit of the age of St. Paul, to estimate the grandeur of thought, and the strangeness with

which the words must have burst upon the world, that Christ the Nazarene, Christ the Crucified, should in all things have the pre-eminence. And yet the whole expansion of the world's history is but the fulfilment of that vision of St. Paul, that his spiritual eye saw, when he contemplated Christ and the Resurrection, and said, "that in all things He should have the pre-eminence."

II. I feel sure that no one who has been an accurate observer of life, has failed to notice the elevating and purifying influence of a true religion wherever it is received. Has it never occurred to you in life to know some mind of a rude and coarse texture brought under the power of the simple faith of the Lord Jesus Christ? You have, perhaps, watched the wonderful transformation. That intellect, once the dullest, has gone up, if not unto the very first class, yet certainly far beyond itself and above the ordinary rank. And that heart has taken a delicacy such as the best secular education rarely succeeds in giving. Christ is in him, and Christ, rising, raises the man to show that wherever Christ is, even in the poorest, darkest, lowest, most miserable sinner's heart, He will have the pre-eminence.

III. Many persons are looking a great deal into their own hearts, as if they would ever find peace by looking down there. The way to arrive at peace is to examine Christ, to magnify Christ, to take grand views of Christ, to find your evidences in Christ. An uplifted Christ is the sinner's rest.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 8th series, p. 261.

REFERENCES: i. 18.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xiv., No. 839; T. Guthrie, *Christ and the Inheritance of the Saints*, p. 269, etc.

Chap. i., ver. 19.—**"For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell."**

THE Communicable Fulness of Christ.

I. Think first of the fulness of Christ referred to in the text. There is in Christ (1) all fulness of life, (2) all fulness of pardoning mercy, (3) all fulness of peace and comfort, (4) all fulness of spiritual strength, (5) all fulness of sanctifying grace.

II. How is all this fulness of Christ appropriated, so as to become ours? The answer is, by faith. Faith, on the strength of the Divine promises, carries the believer to Christ for every thing, and obtains every thing from Him. The believer, through faith, gives himself up to Christ, and, through

faith, Christ is made of God unto him wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

A. D. DAVIDSON, *Lectures and Sermons*, p. 243.

REFERENCES: i. 19. — Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xvii., No. 978; vol. xx., No. 1169. i. 19, 20.—Bishop Westcott, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxx., p. 161. i. 20.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 93; vol. iv., p 85. i. 23.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxviii., No. 1688. i. 24.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. vii., pp. 224, 474.

Chap. i., ver. 27.—**"The glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you."**

CHRIST, the Age, and the Church.

I. The character of our age. It is a distinctive age. Whatever may be said of it in the future, this at least will not be affirmed that it was an age of meagre and unmarked peculiarity. It may indeed not be helpful to individual distinctiveness. I am not sure whether the personal set or type is not being overwhelmed in our time, and the individual with his mark and self-assertion lost in the very freedom and liberty which men have come to enjoy. But the age itself is marked enough. It is unlike all others. (1) It is an age of great power over material conditions. In former generations men were either indifferent to nature, friendly with nature, or terrified by nature. (2) In no way has the result of this triumph over nature shown itself more clearly than in what we regard as the second striking feature which the age presents, viz., the highly developed intercommunication between all parts of the world. (3) It is a natural step from this condition of our time to the next which we note, that of its widely-spread individualism. (4) From all this it follows necessarily that the spirit of our time will be materialistic, alike in its intellectual inquiries, and in its conduct and action.

II. The age being such it requires an inspiration of a moral kind which may direct its energies and control its evil tendency. That inspiration, that government, that law, is Jesus Christ, who has been appointed by God as the Saviour, and through His Spirit the Sanctifier of men. His is the light in which the ages must walk; His the teaching, by which they are schooled; His the presence—living, real, immediate—by which they are animated, round which they gather, and of which, at last, the age will finally become the proper and becoming body. (1) Christ must be apprehended by the age in His historical reality. (2) Christ must also be felt by the age as a personal presence.

(3) The age needs to apprehend Christ in the supremely spiritual quality of His person and work.

L. D. BEVAN, *Christ and the Age*, p. 3.

I. NOTE some of the general results that flow from this relationship of Christ to His people. (1) To be in Christ is to have Christ interposed between you and the condemnation of the law. (2) The believer, as in Christ, has really fulfilled the righteousness of the law, and answered all its demands, either for obedience or for punishment. (3) The believer, as in Christ, stands accepted by the Father. (4) Christ, in the believer, is the Author of a new life in him. (5) Christ, in the believer, destroys the power of sin in him. (6) Christ, in the believer, leads us to look for the transplantation of the graces which adorned Him into the believer.

II. Note how, in virtue of this relationship between Him and them, Christ is to His people the hope of glory. (1) He is so, because from their felt relationship to Him, the burden of sin is removed from their conscience, and they are able, with some confidence, to look up to God as reconciled to them and as their Friend and Father. (2) He is so, as living and reigning with His people, and assimilating them to Himself.

A. D. DAVIDSON, *Lectures and Sermons*, p. 292.

REFERENCES: i. 27.—Parker, *Pulpit Analyst*, p. 61; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 228; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxix., No. 1720; *Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. ii., p. 530; 4th series, vol. i., p. 165; *Expositor*, 1st series, vol. ix., p. 284. i. 27, 28.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 541.

Chap. i., ver. 28.—**"Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."**

ON looking at this verse, three points seem to emerge distinctly from it: the theme, the manner, the object of our preaching.

I. We have, says St. Paul, to preach Christ. Now to preach Christ is not to mention Him, more or less frequently, in your sermons and discourses. It is obvious that there might be a perpetually recurring repetition of His sacred name, and yet that the entire tone of thought should be as antagonistic as possible to the teaching of the Saviour. It is obvious, again, that we might omit the name, keeping it, as it were, altogether in the background, and yet that the sentiments expressed should breathe so much of the Christ-like spirit, as to bring the

image of the unseen Saviour at once to the mental view, and to attract towards Him very strongly the desires and affections of the heart. The preaching of Christ, then, does not depend upon the frequent or infrequent mention of His name, but upon making Him the starting-point and foundation of spiritual life; or as Scripture expresses it, "the only hope of salvation of all the ends of the earth."

II. In the next place, we have to describe the manner of preaching Christ. The Apostle speaks of two methods. First, warning, then teaching. (1) Within the borders of the Christian Church, at the time when the Apostle wrote, there were doubtless some who professed the faith of Christ, but who had no real and vital connection with His sacred person. We can easily understand the necessity that had arisen for loud and emphatic warning on the part of the Christian teacher. Men are slumbering, as the rich man in the parable slumbered; wrapt up in a false belief of their own security; speaking peace to themselves, when there is no peace. We need all to be warned against religious declension. (2) But besides warning, the Apostle speaks of teaching, and of teaching in all wisdom. A most important part of the office of the preacher is that of communicating instruction. He has to bring forth out of the treasures of the Divine word things new and old. Nor is there to be any concealment, any reservation in his teaching. His duty is to declare the whole counsel of God, as far as he understands it himself; and thus, not only to warn his flock, when he has occasion to do so, but also to teach them in all wisdom.

III. We now come to the last point, the object of our preaching: "to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." This is something more than to save every man. It is a great thing to be the instrument, in God's hands, of bringing a fellow-creature to salvation, but when this is done much more has to be done—the saved man has to be built up in the faith, so as to attain to what the Apostle calls "perfection in Christ Jesus." Scripture recognises a growth in the believer. Beginning as a child, he is to advance, through different stages, to the maturity of spiritual manhood. It is to this that the Apostle alludes, and he represents the object of the ministry to be to help men to attain the stature of the strength of the full-grown Christian.

G. CALTHROP, *Penny Pulpit*, new series, No. 998.

REFERENCES: i. 28.—J. Vaughan, *Sermons*, 8th series, p. 53;

Homilist, 4th series, vol. i., p. 167; *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 25; *Plain Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 294; Scott, *University Sermons*, p. 301; W. Spensley, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 241; Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 28; J. Keble, *Sermons from Advent to Christmas Eve*, p. 352. 1. 29.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xvi., No. 914. ii. 1.—*Good Words*, vol. iii. p. 758.

Chap. ii., vers. 1, 2.—**"For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh," etc.**

I. The first wish of the Apostle appears as if it embodied the whole, "that their hearts might be comforted," that is, that by Divine preparation and discipline, they might be prepared, and strengthened, and become heirs of sanctification and rest. "That their hearts might be comforted." Here is the design of the Apostle, God's purpose which His messenger declares, that the end of our religion is our happiness. "That their hearts might be comforted," and that this may be brought about through the processes of obedience, and of faith, is the burden of the Apostolic prayer.

II. The verse then proceeds to unfold the elements, the constituents by which this prosperity of the spirit is to come; and the first and highest of these would appear to be "that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love." The word here rendered "knit together" applies to the fitting of the parts of a house in completeness and harmony. So the heart is to be knit together in unity: not united after many dislocations by bonds from without; bonds which the body may fray away, bonds which the hands of violence may sunder, but compelled from within, weaving the web of its defence, like the spider that is in kings' palaces, out of the texture of its own frame. Love is the root of all other graces, and the ground upon which the temple is to rise.

III. "Unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding." The possession of an assured faith, the importance of an intellectual perception of the truth, and of a decisive grasp of its great principles in the inner man, is urged by the Apostle in many exhortations, and enforced upon us as surely by the experiences of our own witnessing hearts. The faith that is so carefully concealed that only those who enter into the Shekinah of the spirit are aware of its existence, is in sad danger of dying from the very closeness of the air in which alone it permits itself to breathe; but the faith that gives itself to acknowledgment, to testimony, to witness-bearing, is traced by the air of

the mountain, and breathes and thrives healthily among the free fellowships of men.

W. M. PUNSHON, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 168.

REFERENCES: ii. 2.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. ix., p. 384. ii. 6.—R. Tuck, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 85; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 536; Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 313; *Ibid.*, *Sermons*, vol. viii., p. 488; W. Cunningham, *Sermons*, p. 292; T. M. Herbert, *Sketches of Sermons*, p. 92. ii. 6, 7.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. viii., p. 216. ii. 7.—*Church of England Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 245. ii. 8.—R. Thomas, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., pp. 120, 164. ii. 8-10.—*Good Words*, vol. iii., pp. 373, 575. ii. 9.—G. Matheson, *Moments on the Mount*, p. 18. ii. 9-10.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 139; H. Goodwin, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 241. ii. 10.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ix., p. 65; I. Taylor, *Saturday Evening*, p. 344; R. S. Candlish, *The Sonship and Brotherhood of Believers*, pp. 38, 54; J. Vaughan, *Fifty Sermons*, 9th series, p. 285.

Chap ii., ver. 12 (with iii., ver. 1).

BURIED with Him in Baptism.

In our baptism we are made partakers both of the death and resurrection of Christ.

I. People in general, thinking as they do more or less slightly about baptism, forget very much the way in which Holy Scripture speaks about it. They think it a right thing to have their children baptised, but they are not *very* anxious about it. They do it, but they are not sure that they see much good in it. Now compare with this the way in which the Bible speaks. Hear, for instance, what St. Paul says to the Romans, "Know ye not, that all we which were baptised into Jesus Christ were baptised into His death," etc. He tells us that in our baptism we died with Christ, that we were made partakers of His death, that we were buried with Him, that we became united in the likeness of His death. We are brought so wonderfully near to Christ by being baptised and made members of His body, that what is literally true of Him is, in a figure, true of us also; that we actually partake, by the Holy Spirit of God, of Him, and so we have a real share in everything that is His—in His sufferings, in His death, in His resurrection. Yes, and in being already citizens of heaven and sitting with Him in heavenly places.

II. God has seen fit to call on us for lives of service. He has allowed us to live on, some of us to grow old, others to look forward, so far as man can look forward, to years of life, and all sorts of toil and labour in His Church upon the earth. We must, therefore, all our lives long, repeat and enlarge, and

draw out into Christian habit and the long use of holy living, the rising with Christ which in summary we partook of when we were baptised; working hard and faithfully in our several callings, doing all the good we possibly can to our neighbours, helping on the kingdom of God in all ways, showing good examples, praying for one another, seeking more and more those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God, lifting up our minds to high and heavenly things.

G. MOBERLY, *Parochial Sermons*, p. 122.

REFERENCE: ii. 12.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 87.

Chap. ii., ver. 13.—"And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses."

THE New Life.

We notice here—

I. The state of the natural man "dead in sins." The death which holds the cold, lifeless limbs of flesh, is not more true and not half so awful, as this death that darkens the conscience, and perverts the reason, and corrupts the heart, and wraps up all the soul in the deep lethargy of sin from the call of the Saviour's love.

II. The state of the spiritual man quickened together with Christ. Experience of the dead soul we all certainly have had; happy they who have experience of the living soul likewise. The ceaseless activity of bodily life, which makes it happiness to live, and pleasure to move, and which for one part or other of the frame finds ceaseless occupation, represents the motions of the Spirit, which now stir with an inward life the once slumbering soul. The soul has been called out of its grave; it has arisen from the dead, and now stands a living thing before God,—all ear and eye and heart, all love, obedience, and attention.

III. Note the procuring means of change: "having forgiven us all trespasses." All things were easy to God but this one. Was it needed for the purposes of His will to create new worlds? He did but speak, and it was done; He commanded, and they stood fast. Was it needed to deliver a chosen people from the hands of earthly enemies? He did but blow with His wind, and through the deep sea, as along a conqueror's pathway, moved on in safety the armies of the Beloved. But to save souls and to remove out of the way those sins, which stood between us and Him, and yet to keep His truth and

vindicate His justice—to be just, and yet the Justifier of man—needed a sacrifice great and wonderful even before God, the sacrifice of His own dear Son. The gift of the Holy Ghost could not be bestowed, till in the blood of the dying Son of God, and for the merits of His infinite propitiation, God had "forgiven us our trespasses."

E. GARBETT, *The Soul's Life*, p. 98.

REFERENCES: ii. 14.—J. Irons, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 353. ii. 14, 15.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. x., p. 12. ii. 15.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. v., No. 273; *Expositor*, 1st series, vol. x., p. 403. ii. 16.—*Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxix., p. 133. ii. 16, 17.—J. Burton, *Christian Life and Truth*, p. 275. ii. 19.—*Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxix, p. 297.

Chap. ii., ver. 20.—"Dead with Christ."

I. THE one chief thing which the Lord had to accomplish upon earth was a death. That death He would have held in perpetual remembrance in His Church. The great thing which a Christian has to learn is to die daily. How to die is the great lesson for those whose "life is hid with Christ in God." We may easily appear to countenance that slavish occupation of the mind with the mere circumstance of death and experience of dying, which is the source of so much of that sickliness of soul which enfeebles the Church in our times. When I say "learn how to die," I am not thinking of the shrinking flesh which has to be mastered; that is a simple matter. Nor do I refer to the dread meeting with the realities of the eternal state to which the angel of death ushers us. I mean by learning how to die, learning how to lay up treasures which we may carry with us through death, to enrich the life which we shall live in the sphere beyond. We are dead, as the Lord was dead, to that which sin has made of His world. And what was He alive to? "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me and to finish His work."

II. Our Lord gives no hint that man can be a being of two homes—very happy here, very full of the good of this world and very satisfied with it, while very ready at the same time to find a home in the world to come. The Lord's life seemed to say the very opposite of all this. The blessed life for man lies beyond death. Give up the world as a home, give up life as a scene of perfect satisfaction and joy. Take up thy cross; make life a pilgrimage. This is the Christian philosophy of life, wherein whoso walketh and worketh, not weary of patience, not shrinking from the cross, is thrice blessed, blessed with the blessedness of the Lord Jesus.

III. The Lord would have us simply live in a sphere which is above the shock of earth's perturbations. The man who lives a heavenly life on earth will be in no unseemly haste to get out of it. That is the Christian expectation of death. It is the half-developed, the half-experienced, who would pluck half-ripe the fruit of immortalitity. To the complete Christian, death is only supremely welcome when the work of life is nobly done, and its rich fruit is treasured up on high. And that moment is only known to God. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." When we can take that song upon our lips, it is time to go hence, to fall asleep in the arms of death, to awake in the bosom of the everlasting glory.

J. Baldwin Brown, *The Sunday Afternoon*, p. 227.

References: ii. 20-22.—J. H. Newman, *Sermons on Subjects of the Day*, p. 199. ii. 22, 23.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. xii., p. 289.

Chap. iii., ver. 1.—"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God."

I. "Seek things that be above." This is the business first of all of a man's understanding, of the understanding of a Christian who is risen with Christ. Seek those things that be above, seek the conversation of the wise and the instructed. Study if you will the masterpieces, the highest masterpieces of literature: make the most of whatever enlarges and ennobles your conceptions of nature and of human life; in all the higher and purer regions of thought you are nearer Christ even though His name be not uttered. But as you think let your cry be ever "Excelsior." Rest not in the highest regions of earthly excellence, do not be satisfied until you have struggled upwards beyond literature, beyond science, beyond nature into that world which human thought may enter under the guidance of revelation; into that kingdom of heaven which, since the Redeemer died and rose, has indeed been opened to all believers.

II. Yes, seek those things that be above, for it is the business not merely of the understanding, but of the affections. The affections are a particular form or department of desire, and desire is the strongest motive power in the heart of man. St. Augustine said, "Quocunque feror, amore feror." If I am borne upwards, it is by the love of the highest good; if I am being carried downwards, it is by corrupt or perverted desire, by desire which has attached itself to false or unworthy objects, but which, nevertheless, has the control of my movement as a

spiritual being, and in this sense St. James says that desire, when it is finished, bringeth forth sin: sin is the act by which perverted desire attains its object. Seek then, as with your understandings, so with your affections, things above.

III. Here is, lastly, an effort for the sovereign faculty, for the will. "O will of man," the Apostle seems to say, "seek those things that be above." Grant that the will is weakened by the inheritance of moral disease, this weakness has been corrected at least in those who are risen in Christ. Natural disposition may make things easy or difficult. It cannot either prompt or arrest the onward, upward movement of a free, because regenerate will. We have been made masters of ourselves by Christ. We cannot shift the responsibility which attaches to us by putting it upon the very circumstances which are placed within our control. "Seek those things that are above."

H. P. LIDDON, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvii., p. 225.

CHRISTIAN Advance.

I. First, I would have you notice the *basis* upon which St. Paul puts forward his view of the life of the Christian, as a life of advance. The basis is this: he maintains, and maintains earnestly, to those to whom he wrote, that their life had passed through a crisis. He warns them that there has been a special time marked by a special external witness, when that life had advanced out of one sphere of being into another, when they had stepped off one platform of thought on to another; and therefore, because upon the fact of this momentous charge he based his view of their life, the exhortation of the text had real force. Christianity is not a mere matter of feeling and emotion. Christianity has indeed in its keeping forces capable of drawing forth the warmest emotions, and kindling the most glowing feelings of the human heart. But Christianity in its very essence is something deeper than that; and as Christian life, on its *subjective* side—on the side of the soul—is something more than feeling, so that on which it rests *objectively* is something more than mere idea. The basis of it all is fundamental fact.

II. If you have turned to God, have listened to His call, if you have taken Him at His word and submitted to Jesus, the platform of your life is changed, the sphere of your activity is altered, and you start not merely to a life of labour, but to something higher, better, greater, than labour—an *advance* upward and onward on a new and glorious course. There are minds which are apt to look upon the Christian life as a life of

mere stagnation. On the contrary, we must remember that there remains before us the advancing life.

III. Christianity in urging us to that advance is falling in with the fundamental fact and experience of our nature. It does not need regenerating grace, it does not need a converting call, to tell us men that there is within us a yearning and a longing for higher things. Ye are "risen with Christ," and therefore do not merely have yearnings, and indefinite longings, but "seek those things that are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." (1) Those who do "seek the things which are above," as a matter of fact, become elevated in tone and temper. (2) It is not only true that the tone of life is changed by "seeking" them, but also that the sphere of thought is enlarged. (3) "Seeking those things which are above" helps us not only to reach towards, but gradually and steadily to attain to virtues purely Christian. To grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ is a possibility to every soul young and old.

W. J. Knox Little, *Characteristics of the Christian Life*, p. 26.

I. It is on the great fact that Christ is risen that the whole attention of faith is concentrated. When we have grasped this, then all the other truths which are emphatically doctrines of faith, the Atonement, the Incarnation, the Pre-existent Godhead of the Lord Jesus Christ, unfold themselves in their right order. For we come to know Him in the very power of His resurrection, and so we are able to rest on His Word when He tells us, "I came to give My life a ransom for the many."

II. The Resurrection of Christ is not a dead fact of the past; it is a living fact, which looks on to the future; it is the type and earnest of our own rising again. He is the firstfruits of the great harvest, which shall be reaped at the Judgment Day, gathered safe into the garner of God. Wherever we go, the shadow of death falls upon this life. That shadow has already swallowed those whom we honour, reverence, love; it is so near ourselves, that it must at times cast, in thought and anticipation, some shadows on our own path. We must have light upon it, if we are really to live as true men, and if we are to know anything of a living God. It is the knowledge of the great truth of Easter, which alone lights it up.

III. But it is not on the Resurrection as a fact in the past St. Paul dwells; this is now accepted by all as one of the first elements of Christian truth. It is not even on the future hope

of our resurrection through it, for that also is taken almost for granted now. It is on the eternal life in and through Christ, actually given us in the present. The regeneration in Christ and those who are made His, is spoken of as a present resurrection in us—a resurrection of the spiritual life, from the bondage of the flesh, and from the death of sin: it is not, therefore, that we shall rise, but that we are risen in Christ. Faith is not content even with the saying, "I am the Resurrection"; it goes on to the still deeper utterance of the Lord, "I am the Life"; he that liveth and believeth on Me shall never die.

A. BARRY, *First Words in Australia*, p. 145.

REFERENCES: iii. 1.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 269; *Ibid.*, vol. vi., p. 216; Scott, *University Sermons*, p. 42; J. Vaughan, *Sermons*, 11th series, p. 189; *Plain Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 61; Liddon, *Easter Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 37; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. viii., p. 88; A. Barry, *Cheltenham College Sermons*, p. 203; H. J. Wilmot-Buxton, *The Life of Duty*, vol. i., p. 201; H. P. Liddon, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 217; *Homilist*, 4th series, vol. i., p. 362; E. Johnson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxv., p. 342. iii. 1, 2.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxvi., No. 1530; *Plain Sermons*, vol. x., p. 133. i. 1-3.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. v., p. 202; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., pp. 87, 224; W. Wilkinson, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. xxx., p. 109. iii. 1-4.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xiii., p. 129.

Chap. iii., ver. 2.—"Set your affections on things above."

I. WHAT does the Apostle mean by the words *Set your affections*? Our affections are that part of our nature by which we go out in sentiments of interest, complacency or delight. What the Apostle requires of us is to let our minds go out upon these "things above," and rest in quiet contemptation of them. He would have us take them as settled and indubitable facts, clearly revealed to us, and make them the object of our deep, continuous and interested study. He calls us not to pry into things hidden and recondite, but to ponder things manifest and revealed. It is not to a process of research, but to a process of reflection that he urges us.

II. There is, I trust, little need to enlarge upon the importance of cultivating and cherishing such a habit as the Apostle here inculcates. (1) When the affections are habitually set on things above, the surest evidence of regeneration, and of being in a state of grace, is afforded. (2) The setting of the affections on things above is supremely conducive to the right discharge of the duties, and the right endurance of the trials, of the Christian course. (3) As this habit of spiritual affection and thought fits for a useful and happy life on earth, so it alone pre-

pares us for the higher life in heaven. Blessed is that man whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find ready, his eye turned from the fading joys of earth, and resting on the glories of opening heaven.

W. Lindsay Alexander, *Sermons*, p. 309.

References: iii. 2.—T. de Witt Talmage, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 129; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 28; *Homilist*, vol. iv., p. 413; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. i., p. 306; W. Arthur, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxviii., p. 130; H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, vol. xxvi., p. 355.

Chap. iii., ver. 3.—**"For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."**

The Hidden Life.

If we are true Christians, we have passed through a death of some kind, and our life, if we have one, is a hidden life, a life not seen by men, a life safe in the company and the custody of Christ.

I. Now, doubtless, there was a more visible and palpable contrast in the days of St. Paul, between the life of one who was and one who was not a Christian, than there can ever be in a country like our own. But though the contrast is more vivid in a heathen country than among the members of a Christian body, yet it is indeed not more real. In the hearts of professing Christians, Christ must either succeed or fail in introducing a new life, of which death must be the precursor.

II. Do you know anything of gradual dying to sin? You might have called the struggle by some other name. But you *have* struggled with a cruel darling sin, and you feel the intense truthfulness of that description which represents the struggles and deed of dying, and the victory as a fact of death. And certainly, if this be so, you will already have overcome the great difficulty which blinds so many to the existence of the hidden life with Christ. The pure in heart are those who have the vision of God. And purity of heart is only granted to those who have conquered, or have died to all duplicity and all defilement.

H. M. Butler, *Harrow Sermons*, p. 344.

Spiritual Mindedness.

What St. Paul here urges is, indeed, the highest perfection of Christianity, and therefore of human nature; but it is not an impossible perfection, and St. Paul's own life and character are our warrant that it is nothing sickly or foolish or fanatical.

I. It is most certain that Christ requires us to be dead only to

what is evil. But the essence of spiritual mindedness consists in this, that it is assumed that with earth and all things earthly, evil and imperfection are closely mixed; so that it is not possible to set our affections keenly upon, or to abandon ourselves to the enjoyment of, any earthly thing without the danger of the affections and their enjoyment becoming evil. In other words, there is that in the state of things within and around us, which renders it needful to be ever watchful; and watchfulness is inconsistent with an intensity of delight and enjoyment.

II. Consider, for instance, that lively sense of the beauty of all nature, that indescribable feeling of delight which arises out of consciousness of health and strength and power. Suppose we abandon ourselves to such impressions without restraint, and is it not manifest that they are the extreme of godless pride and selfishness? For do we not know that in this world, and close to us wherever we are, there is, along with all the beauty and enjoyment which we witness, a large proportion also of evil and suffering? The soldier has something else to do than to gaze like a child on the splendour of his uniform, or the brightness of his sword: those faculties which we find as it were burning within us, have their work before them, a work far above their strength, though multiplied a thousand fold; the call to them to be busy is never silent; there is an infinite voice in the infinite sins and sufferings of millions which proclaims that the contest is raging around us; every idle moment is treason; now is the time for unceasing efforts, and not till the victory is gained may Christ's soldiers throw aside their arms, and resign themselves to enjoyment and to rest.

T. ARNOLD, *Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 39.

DEATH and Life with Christ.

It is the Christian state that is here described; the state of the real Christian. And it is described in a twofold aspect, as a state of death and a state of life. The paradox is not peculiar to this passage.

I. "Ye are dead." This is strong language addressed to true believers. But it is very gracious language. In conversion the sinner does indeed die with Christ, being buried with Him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead, by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. It would thus appear that there are three stages of the death of believers. (1) In their original state of unconcern and unbelief, they are dead. (2) In their effectual

calling by the Holy Ghost, they die. (3) And ever after, as long as they remain on earth, they are to reckon themselves dead indeed.

II. As it is said of those who live in pleasure, that they are dead while they live, so it may be said of you who believe in Jesus, that you live while you are dead. And your life is hid with Christ in God. Follow Christ now, from earth to heaven; from the scene of His agony here below, to the scene of His blessed joy in the presence of the Father above. (1) Your life is with Christ. It is, in fact, identified with Him. He is your life, and He is so in two respects. (*a*) You live with Christ as partakers of His right to live. (*b*) You live with Christ in respect of the new spirit of your life. (2) Further, this life, being with Christ, must be where He is. It must therefore be in God. He is your life. And where He is, there is your life. But He is in the bosom of the Father. Your life with Christ, therefore, is in God. For in His favour is life, and His loving-kindness is better than life. (3) Finally, this life with Christ in God is hid. It must needs be so, since it enters in within the veil. This suggests the touching ideas of security and spirituality, of privacy and of seclusion. Your life is not to be always hidden. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory."

R. S. CANDLISH, *Sermons*, p. 67.

THE purpose of the Apostle is evidently to exhort the Colossians to live the highest possible life, the life of the resurrection, the life of heaven even on earth. To do that is here described in two words: "Seek the things that are above," "Set your mind, or affection, on the things that are above." Seek them in order to find and possess them. Seek them as goodly pearls, for they can be found; they have an existence. They are realities outside us, not mere thoughts and feelings and methods, but objective things which can be sought and can be found. The other word is, "Set your mind"—think the things—"that are above." For though they are realities outside us they have the power of being transmuted into thoughts and feelings. We have the faculty of changing them from outward realities into governing principles of character. We can think them, we can make thoughts out of them. They are the material out of which great ideas and great characters are formed. Then the Apostle mentions two reasons why we should do this, why we should seek these, and why we should think them. The one reason is, "that ye are risen with

Christ." The other is, "that ye are dead with Christ." Evidently "with Christ" ought to be supplied in thought in the third verse, for "if we die with Christ," he says in the twentieth verse of the first chapter. If we died with Christ—not in ourselves, but in Christ—we are risen with Christ, and we have died with Christ. And the things must come in that order—resurrection first with Christ, death after with Christ. The other is the natural order. Men die first, and they lie in the world for centuries, but the resurrection comes at last, afterwards. The supernatural order is the reverse. We rise first from the natural into the supernatural, and then in that supernatural resurrection we die unto the natural life which we lived before. We rise first, we die afterwards. Every life must have these two aspects. It must appear, it must hide itself. It is so with every life, even the lowest. If it is a life it must hide itself. The rose tree in the garden lives and appears in leaf and flower, but it does so because its life is hid in the roots. And if it had no roots, unseen, hiding themselves under the surface, you would never see a leaf or a rose in sight. It is so with men. No man will ever appear great, will ever show signs of greatness of character, unless he has a hidden life. There is more hidden than appears. It is so with religion. A religion that is always on the surface is not a living one. A religion that is real will have a glorious manifestation in proportion as it has an equally glorious hiding.

I. Christ and the Christian are hid in the mystery of God's providence. In the development of the Church, in the progress of Christ's religion, in the persecutions, in the prosperity or adversity, in all the changing circumstances of the ages, Christ is there hiding Himself. Now, as Jesus, so we. We are hid. A Christian man is a hidden man. The world has never understood him. The natural man knoweth not the things that are of the Spirit of God. We must be spiritual men before we can understand a spiritual fact and before we can understand a spiritual person. Though it be a poor ignorant man that is dying calmly because he trusts the Saviour, there is a mystery in that death that the philosophers of this world do not understand. We are hid.

II. In the second place, Christ is hid in the sanctuary of heaven. He is gone far from us, into the secret pavilion into which only the High Priest can enter, into the presence of God. And when the high priest under the law entered into the holiest place, the ordinary priests had to leave the holy place in

order that the high priest might be alone in awful solitariness, entering into the presence of Jehovah. Jesus Christ went straight from the cross to heaven through the rent veil, that is to say, His flesh. He went into the holiest place, and there He is. He has been there for nearly two thousand years. When He shall appear, we shall appear also, we shall be revealed also.

T. C. Edwards, *from Sermon preached at Mansfield College.*

On Living.

Nature means that without learning, powers and feelings grow and act. We see by nature. The power of sight is born with us. The eye as a matter of course is born, and as a matter of course sees light, and as a matter of course sees whatever light prints on it. When an eye does not see light, it has ceased to be an eye, though it often looks like an eye still. The eye that does not see light is, as an eye, dead. The image of God in man was once nature; and God's image, or nature, as a matter of course, saw and felt God's presence, for the nature of God in man naturally received that which was natural to it, and when this natural power perished, this eye was put out, it was dead; and man, as far as the true life went, was dead.

II. On that day death ends, when the life of God becomes incarnate in man, and man, born of God, is willing to lead a life in God's image. This is Christianity; nothing else is. Life, life victorious; life able to see God in this world; life able, as it were, to feel the presence of God in all things; life, that changes pain into glory, and bodily shame and death to a very present sense of heaven and God. The moment self is really cast aside, man's spirit acknowledges at once that a higher power is come, and tastes the joy of truth and strength, for Christ's sake; able to choose pain and know its good; and can see Christ the Sanctifier of pain, the Interpreter and Glorifier of sorrow and weakness, the Destroyer of the idolatry of the body, and all that belongs to it; pride of head, or pride of hand, or the lusts of the flesh; able to see Him the Lord of life, as higher motives come into sight, and base things please no more. So heaven is to the living no far-off dream, but a very present sense of life begun; and bodily death is no king of terrors, but a slight and vanishing trouble in the path, scarcely seen and never obscuring the beyond.

E. Thring, *Uppingham Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 278.

THE World Within.

I. There will be found in all mankind a ceaseless effort to put what we do, and its effect, and what is thought of it, and what others do, and its effect, and what is thought of it, in the place of life, and to give it the name of our life, and their life. But the moment we think of it we see at once that what we and others call our lives, that is, the outcome that is seen, is as nothing compared with the infinite unceasing goings on in our own inward being, which are not seen. For one action or one word, that comes out, a thousand castles in the air, a thousand dreams or projects, a thousand reasonings and decisions, mental struggles, victories, defeats, backward and forward movements, take place within, that are not seen; and these are not the life, they are only part of that spirit, which is working itself out into a more perfect growth and habit of good or evil. Hence it comes to pass, what I am sure is true, that not infrequently the estimate formed of a man shall be one thing, and the effect of his life another. So different is life from actions, and still more from the judgment men form of the actions.

II. As if to put away from our hearts the idea of much work, and to make us value life itself apart from the long day's labour, Christ Himself spent thirty years of quiet preparation in a cottage home, and only three in public. Nor can we tell which was the more important; we can only say with certainty, each was perfect, each the half of the perfect whole, each incomplete without the other. But it is clear from this that the fierce pressure of consuming work is not the ideal set before man in the life of Christ, any more than it is in Christ's parable of the labourers in the vineyard. The silent thirty years are full of the glories of holy silence, and it is on the cross that the Redeemer draws all men unto Him. Learn to make the life within true and powerful. Measure yourselves, not by what you do, but by what you are. So shall you be like Christ.

E. THRING, *Uppingham Sermons*, vol. i., p. 277.

THE Hidden Life.

Life is a mystery, however we regard it. The life of our natural body is a mystery. The inner life of every man is a mystery. The life of the Christian soul is a mystery. The Apostle tells us it is hid with Christ in God.

I. The immortal soul is dwelling as a guest in a material body. It is the very life of that body. What is the body with-

out the soul? It is the soul which gives expression to the face. It is the soul which bids the tongue utter speech. But the soul which makes its presence felt in so wondrous a way at all the outposts of the body has inmost depths which a stranger's eye cannot penetrate. They are revealed to no eye but the Lord's. He has searched them out and known them. No inward thought is hid from Him.

And it is the inmost depths of the Christian soul of which the Apostle speaks. They are hid with Christ in God. A Christian soul scarcely needs even an Apostle's words to tell this. The same Divine spirit which illumined St. Paul's soul, and unveiled to him this deep suggestive truth, has access to the souls of all lovers of Jesus. They know that St. Paul speaks what is divinely true. Their own experience has taught them so. Each individual soul knows that its history is a sealed book to all but Christ. We can never thoroughly disclose ourselves to one another. There is an innermost shrine which cannot be entered by the closest human friend, an innermost shrine in which we hold communion with the Lord—a communion which, indeed, constitutes the hidden life of the soul.

II. The truth of the life of the Christian soul consisting in its union with the Lord should be very precious to us. It is a truth of which men have different and varied experiences. For, as it is possible for men to grow in grace and in knowledge of their Lord and Saviour, so it is possible for some to enter into a closer union with the Lord than has been vouchsafed to others. It is possible that some in their religious life have not been as yet so richly blessed as others; but all who have the faintest yearnings in their hearts towards Christ may feel assured that the yearning is not so faint as to pass unrecognised by the Lord. He knows of the work begun in their souls. He knows that they are drawing nigh unto Himself. He will aid them to draw into nearer union still.

H. N. GRIMLEY, *Tremadoc Sermons*, p. 1.

REFERENCES: iii. 3.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. vi., p. 165; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vii., p. 333; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 111; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 245. iii. 3, 4.—A. Barry, *Sermons for Passiontide and Easter*, p. 121. iii. 4.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 399; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. viii., pp. 160, 179; Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 223; *Ibid.*, *Sermons*, vol. xi., No. 617.

Chap. iii., ver. 5.—"Covetousness, which is idolatry."

HOWEVER startling this phraseology may appear at first, it is

perfectly easy to point out, by instancing a few particulars in analysis, the plain reason for such an application of terms. Gold seems in many respects very like a god; not the only living and true God, but some human conception of the deity, resembling those of the savage or unchristianised regions of the world.

I. No matter where we begin. Take the attributes it possesses, if you will, for examination. (1) Omniscience, for example. Wealth seems to know everything on the instant that it occurs. Gold has a million eyes; it sees in the dark; it infringes patents, pre-empts islands, places itself over hidden mines. It knows everything by instinct, it pushes forward almost as if it were an all-seeing deity. (2) Of course, omnipresence follows. "Mammon worms its way where scruples might despair." (3) Omnipotence likewise. Gold rules the world, gold owns the land, inhabits the palaces, buys up the offices of the nation, sways the mighty sceptre of social influence, and becomes the master of men.

II. Wealth assumes to be a god, and oftentimes really appears to be one, because of the worship it attracts.

III. Wealth seems very like a god in the favours it bestows.

IV. Wealth seems very like a god because of the scourges it inflicts. See then (1) The reason why God is so violent in striking at this sin. It is the most direct offence that can be given to Him. (2) See, too, how covetousness destroys personal piety. He is covetous whose piety is chilled by gold; he is covetous for whom Christ is not a sufficiency when gold fails. (3) See how covetousness ruins all one's future. It leaves him with his chosen god. "Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone."

C. S. ROBINSON, *Sermons on Neglected Texts*, p. 143.

REFERENCES: iii. 10.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 207.

Chap. iii., ver. 11.—"Christ is all, and in all."

CHRIST All, and in all.

I. Christ is the substance or fulness of "all" things—that which really goes to make the being of everything. Let us pause a little, and help ourselves to begin this year with worthy views of the dignity of Christ in the whole physical and spiritual universe. Everything that is was first a thought in the mind of Christ. There it lay from all eternity, till, by His will and power, that thought became matter. That was creation. Therefore every created thing is a development of the mind of Christ.

"All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made." Therefore Christ is all things. Christ is "all" in every believer. "Without Me ye can do nothing."

II. Christ is the one characterising feature, the determining test of everything. This is the precise meaning of the verse. All characteristics merge, all distinctions are done away in Christ. "There is neither Greek nor Jew, there is neither circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ is all, and in all."

III. Christ is the bond that unites "all." For so we have it, —"Christ is all, and in all." The same Christ in many makes many one. That is God's unity, the only unity God recognises. Here lie the deep mysteries of our religion, and here is the power of the sacraments. There are two things which take place in every regenerate man. You pass into Christ, and Christ passes into you.

IV. Christ is the sufficiency and the satisfaction of life. Ask the years that are gone! Take council of the past! What is satisfaction? Where has desire rested? When has ambition had enough? It has pleased God to treasure up all that man really wants in one treasury, the Lord Jesus Christ. And, excepting there, no man, since the foundation of this world, ever found it. He fills all things. He must fill your hearts. You will date your peace, your first true peace, to that day when you could say of Christ, "He is all, and in all to me."

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 4th series, p. 268.

REFERENCES: iii. 11.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xvii., No. 1006; J. Keble, *Sermons from Ascension Day to Trinity*, p. 249. iii. 12.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 501; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ix., p. 29. iii. 13.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxxi., No. 1841.

Chap. iii., ver. 15.—"Let the peace of God rule in your hearts."

I. THE *region*: where the ruling power touches and takes effect. "Your hearts." The heart, as it is called by a metaphor common to Scripture and the language of ordinary life, is the regulator of the whole man. It means the will and the affections, as distinguished from the intellect. It is the choosing faculty, as distinguished from the knowing faculty. It is that in man which fastens impetuously on an object loved, without waiting in all cases for a decision of the judgment whether the object be worthy. It is by the heart that the attitude is determined, the path traced out, and the impulse given. When the heart

is drawn in one direction, the whole man follows. The rush of an evil heart's affections, like other swollen streams, will not yield to reason. When God by His Word and Spirit comes to save, He saves by arresting the heart and making it new.

II. The *reign*: the manner in which the heart is possessed and controlled. "Rule." The word translated "rule" in the text occurs nowhere else in the Scripture. It is borrowed from the practice of the Greeks at their great national games; and relates to the prize for which the athletes contended in the stadium. The prize giver exercised over the runners or wrestlers a kind of rule. By the display of the prize he held, he led, he impelled them. They felt the impulse, and gave their whole being over to its sway. The word which designated the power and office of the president is the "rule" of our text. This is the kind of rule which Man's maker applies to man's heart.

III. The *ruler*: the power that sways a human heart, and so saves and sanctifies the man. "The peace of God." (1) It is God and no idol that should rule in the human heart. (2) God's peace holds a heart from sin, and rules it in holiness.

W. ARNOT, *Roots and Fruits*, p. 415.

Chap. iii., ver. 15.—"The peace of God."

THE Peace of God and the Peace of the Devil.

The word "peace" is that which is most frequently employed in the Scriptures to set forth the blessedness of the righteous. Peace suggests the idea of what is calm, deep, tranquil, unruffled, something that may be in its nature divine and in its character permanent.

I. Religious peace may be denominated the peace of God, because, in one sense, or in some of its higher elements, it is that for which God made and constituted man at first. It is an approach towards the realisation of God's original idea of the happiness of humanity, for it springs from intercourse with God.

II. Religious blessedness, as now experienced by humanity, is the peace of God, because it is the result of His merciful interposition for man, as well as the realisation of His original idea respecting him. This blessedness is referred thus directly to God, because it is by God's grace that it is possible; because it is by the gift of His Son that it is procured; and because it is through the application of His truth that it is produced. It consists in the hope of forgiveness of sin and the exercise of

filial trust and confidence, through the restoration and re-establishment of those ruptured relations which sin had broken.

III. The blessedness of the spiritual life in man is the peace of God, because in addition to its including something of that for which God originally designed him, it is that which is immediately imparted or produced by God's Holy Spirit, and is thus in some degree of the nature of a divine donation.

IV. Religious peace is "the peace of God" because it is sustained, nourished, and enlarged by those acts and exercises, private and public, which bring the soul into contact with God.

V. There is, however, the peace of the devil, of the world, of sin, of the flesh. It is quite possible humanity may go to sleep in death under the peace of the devil, apparently as quietly and calmly as those who fall asleep in Jesus. The peace of the devil consists in the destruction of all that is noblest and finest and greatest in man. Just such a contrast is there in the heart of man, between the peace of the devil and the peace of God.

T. BINNEY, *Penny Pulpit*, new series, No. 605.

REFERENCES: iii. 15.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxviii., No. 1693: F. D. Maurice, *Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 19; W. Page, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxv., p. 171; F. W. Robertson, *Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 130; J. H. Wilson, *The Gospel and its Fruits*, p. 259.

Chap. iii., ver. 16.—**"Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."**

I. CHRIST'S Word is simple. It is all plain to him that understandeth. There have been many books which professed great things; some that promised to work wonders for man, and some that even professed to come from God, but they were abstruse and enigmatical. They showed how insecure they were by the mystery in which they veiled their meaning. But the Saviour, in His kindness and sincerity, has made His Word an easy and simple book, so plain that it need perplex no one, so self-evident that it is ready for everybody's use.

II. And yet though so simple there is no book so significant. Like Christ Himself in Christ's Word are hid the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; and those who dig into this hidden treasure may rest assured that as the word of an infinite Being there is an infinite fulness in it.

III. The Word of Christ is saving. There is a company whom no man can number before the throne; but ere they went to heaven they were all brought to God. It is Christ's Word

received into the soul, and abiding there, which is the source and securing of its immortality.

IV. Christ's Word is sanctifying. If you get to love and revere it so as to exalt it into a companion and counsellor, it will tell on all your conduct. Like a lamp it will reveal what is wrong in your character and motives, and be the great help to self-examination; but, better than a lamp, like a wise and loving friend it will show the excellence of holiness, and set you on the way to attaining it.

V. And sustaining. Daily work needs daily bread, and it is in the Bible magazine that the bread of life is stored. And just as the man who wishes strength for labour would deem it false economy to save his time and take no food, so theirs is foolish haste who think to struggle on from day to day without the Spirit's bread.

VI. It is suited to all. If Luther adored the fulness of Scripture, we have as much reason to bless God for its variety and all-fittingness.

J. HAMILTON, *Works*, vol. vi., p. 17.

THE Word of Christ: Its Truths and Transformation.

I. It is of infinite moment that the Bible truths should dwell in us. To have clear conceptions and secure possession of them is faith, and he is a believer whose mind these truths occupy and inhabit. But I fear the best that can be said for many Gospel hearers is that they get a view of the Word on a visit. It is not a guest nor an inmate. Just as you may sit at the window and see passengers in the street or the public road, and make remarks on them; but none of them is any friend of yours, so you do not detain them, you do not run down and open the door and invite them in. So many see a truth pass by and they pronounce a verdict on it, but they do not take it home. Never rest till Christ's Word dwells in you. Like Abraham in the tent-door, look out for it. Enthrone it in your highest heart, and bid all your being wait on it and obey it.

II. But it is not enough that Christ's truths inhabit your convictions. In order to be strictly Biblical, you must not only ascertain the truth, but you must catch the tone; and in those only does Christ's Word dwell richly in whom Christ's Spirit dwells as well as Christ's sayings. It is perfectly possible, and for some purposes eminently important, to cull out from the Bible and arrange and classify its several truths. But the soundest doctrine is no more the Bible than carbon is the

diamond, and the noblest system of theology is no more the Word of Christ than a vast museum is the smiling world which its Creator greeted "very good."

III. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. Let its lifesome energy inspire your character. Exhibit the Saviour's truth in its transforming power. Then, indeed, will Christ's Word dwell in you richly, when it not only fills up your soul with sincerity and spiritual-mindedness, but exhibits itself in a radiant efflorescence over all your conduct. To have the Word dwelling in you so richly is to be Scripturalised—to have *Christ's* Word so dwelling is to be Christianised.

J. HAMILTON, *Works*, vol. vi., p. 46.

THE Word of Christ: Its Truths and Its Tone.

I. Let the truths and realities of the Word inhabit your convictions; and, in order that they may inhabit, let them enter. Many turn towards the firmament of Scripture a telescope with the lid still on, and then see nothing wonderful. Many plunge into the scriptural fountain a bottle with the cork still in, and marvel that, however long they leave it, they still bring it empty up. And many pray, "O send forth Thy light and Thy truth," but keep their minds so closed by worldliness and carelessness, or by some obstinate prepossession, or some besetting sin, that the light and truth cannot enter. Turn towards the Word of God an open eye and an honest heart. Be desirous to find something; seek and you shall find. Should there be branches in the tree of knowledge above your present reach, gather such fruit as is more accessible; and when refreshed and strengthened by those truths which you do attain, you will be able to reach those which grow more loftily.

II. Let its tone be infused into your temper. When a person speaks, there is not only the thing he says, but the tone in which he says it. There is a dry and flippant tone which withers the sincerity out of the kindest words, and there is a full-hearted tone, which will fill the most common words with a melting magic. There is not only Bible truth, but a Bible tone; not only Christ's Word, but Christ's way of speaking it. The keynote of Scripture is love, and the truth of Jesus is all spoken in a divinely gracious tone. There is something more than doctrine in the Word of Christ. A chemist may analyse the wine of Lebanon, and he may tell you that it contains so many salts and alkalies; and you may combine all these, you may mix them in the just proportions; but chemistry will never

create what the vintage yielded. To make the wine of Lebanon needs Lebanon itself,—the mountain with its gushing heart and aromatic springs. A theologian may analyse the Christian doctrine; he may tell you how many truths and tenets this Bible contains, and you may combine them all; but it needs Christ's own mind, His loving heart and benignant spirit, to reproduce the truth as it is in Jesus.

J. HAMILTON, *Works*, vol. vi., p. 32.

REFERENCES: iii. 16.—J. G. Rogers, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 33; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iii., p. 270; vol. iv., p. 185; vol. vii., p. 378; R. S. Candlish, *Sermons*, p. 188; *Homilist*, vol. v., p. 14; *Ibid.*, 3rd series, vol. vi., p. 270; A. Raleigh, *The Little Sanctuary*, p. 273; J. Edmunds, *Sermons in a Village Church*, vol. ii., p. 1; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxvii., p. 302.

Chap. iii., ver. 17.—**"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him."**

I. OBSERVE the extent of this saying, an extent of which it is impossible to divest it. Either it is a mere empty exaggeration, or it goes to the extent of applying to all the acts of man's life, important or unimportant. And it is plain, that for such to be the case it must propose to us some motive, and some rule, which shall touch that daily life at every point. No sight is more common than to find a man actuated by a powerful motive which rules and directs his whole life. Reality is the essence and necessary condition of all such springs of life and action. It is impossible that a man should give up his heart and life to pursuit of that which he does not believe. The hypocrite is no exception; he only makes use of something which he does not believe as an instrument towards the attainment of something which he does believe. Observe how such motives act on man. (1) Their influence is a constraining power, of which he is unconscious, rather than a stimulus carried on by conscious effort. (2) They are very seldom indeed loudly professed by the persons on whom they act. Here, as in nature, the deepest is the stillest. But, on the other hand, by its very stillness, all who are observant know its depth.

II. Note the motive implied in the words, "In the name of the Lord Jesus." Let Christ's love to me become to me not only an acknowledged fact, but the acknowledged fact of my life; then it will become a constraining motive; then it will not be contented with influencing some of my faculties, with employing some of my time, with claiming some of my affections;

but from the very nature of things it must and will have all, will absorb me into His service, and take possession of my heart and motives, and my life, day by day; will be the sun that lights me to my unborn life; so that whatsoever I do, in word or deed, I shall do under the influence of this constraining motive.

H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. i., p. 67.

REFERENCES: iii. 17.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 12; vol. v., p. 31; H. J. Wilmot-Buxton, *The Life of Duty*, vol. i., p. 90; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xvi., No. 913; *Homilist*, vol. iv., p. 415; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxv., p. 289; H. W. Beecher, *Plymouth Pulpit*, 10th series, p. 391.

Chap. iii., ver. 21.—"Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged."

THE Christian Training of Children.

I. Man has enemies enough within; corruption of many kinds is deeply rooted in the human heart, and, sooner or later, springs up and manifests itself in various forms, according to different natural dispositions. And it is a comparatively rare thing that sinful tendencies show themselves for the first time in mature life. All the evil tendencies in a child's nature will have shown themselves very unmistakably before he has exchanged his father's house for the great stage of the world. If dispositions like our own have been found in our children, it was the effect of our hurtful example; the sin of the old called forth that of the young. Or, if they have opposite faults from ours, it is generally resistance of the wrong with which our faults threaten them that rouses theirs to activity. It is not unusual with us parents, when we grow weary of the struggle, to give up all godly training, and leave the children to their own way. If we only guard our children against being distrustful of us, everything is put right, but if we have got into that unhappy condition, it involves ruin and loss in our whole relations with them.

II. Consider what, according to God's appointment, the young are to be to us. It is only the children, joyous and free from care, who can diffuse around us the atmosphere of oblivion of the world that is so needful for us. It is they who, when we come back to the home circle, see in our faces nothing but our joy in being there again, and themselves feel only that they have been missing us, and now have us back once more. This happiness is, of course, lost for him in whose home the young hearts have been embittered; for he finds awaiting him at

home only more painful difficulties than those he has left behind. When we provoke and estrange our children, both they and we lose the best of our life together. And as they, on their side, can best guard against any growing bitterness by respectful obedience, according to the first commandment with promise, let us, on our part, be unremitting in that self-denying love to them, which seeks not our own pleasure and advantage, but theirs, and which has its direct reward in the brightness and peace which the companionship of the young so naturally brings when there are no jars and misunderstandings.

F. SCHLEIERMACHER, *Selected Sermons*, p. 146.

REFERENCES: iii. 23, 24.—G. Salmon, *Gnosticism and Agnosticism*, p. 243. iii. 24.—Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 318; *Ibid.*, *Sermons*, vol. xx., No. 1205. iv. 1.—W. Braden, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 140. iv. 2.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 2; *Ibid.*, *Sermons*, vol. vii., No. 354.

Chap. iv., ver. 5.—"Them that are without."

WITHOUT and Within.

This is, of course, an expression for the non-Christian world; the outsiders who are beyond the pale of the Church. There was a very broad line of distinction between it and the surrounding world in the early Christian days, and the handful of Christians in a heathen country felt a great gulf between them and the society in which they lived. That distinction varies in form, and varies somewhat in apparent magnitude according as Christianity has been rooted in a country for a longer or a shorter time; but it remains, and is as real to-day as ever it was, and there is neither wisdom nor kindness in ignoring the distinction.

I. Who are they that are without? And what is it that they are outside of? The phrase was apparently borrowed from Judaism, where it meant "outside the Jewish congregation," and its primary application, as used here, is no doubt to those who are outside the Christian Church. But we must remember that connection with any organised body of believing men is not being "within," and that isolation from all these is not necessarily being "without." External relationships and rites cannot determine spiritual conditions. The kingdom of Christ is not a visible external community. The kingdom of Christ, or of God, or of heaven, is found wherever human wills obey the law of Christ, which is the will of God, the decrees of

heaven. "Those that are without" are those whose wills are not bent in loving obedience to the Lord of their spirits.

II. Notice next the force of the phrase as implying the woeful condition of those without. It is full of pathos. It is the language of a man whose heart yearns as, in the midst of his own security, he thinks of the houseless wanderers in the dark of the storm. He thinks pityingly of what they lose, and of that to which they are exposed.

III. Lastly, why is anybody without? It is no fault but their own. It is not God's. He can appeal with clean hands, and ask us to judge what more could He have done for His vineyard that He has not done for it. (1) Many remain outside because they do not really believe in the danger. (2) There are some, too, who stop outside because they do not much care for the entertainment that they will get within. It does not strike them as being very desirable. They have no appetite for it. We preachers seek to draw hearts to Jesus by many motives, and among others by setting forth the blessings which He bestows. But if a man does not care about pardon, does not fear judgment, does not want to be good, has no taste for righteousness, is not attracted by the pure and calm pleasures which Christ offers, the invitation falls flat on his ear. (3) Some of us, again, would like well enough to be inside if that would keep us from dangers which we believe to be real, but we do not like the doorway; we do not like to fall on our knees and say, "I am a sinful man, O Lord." There was room in the boat for the last man who stood on the deck, but he could not make up his mind to leave a bag of gold. There was no room for that. Therefore he would not leap, and went down with the ship.

A. MACLAREN, *Christian Commonwealth*, April 30th, 1885.

REFERENCE: iv. 5.—J. N. Norton, *The King's Ferry Boat*, p. 110.

Chap. iv., ver. 14 (with 2 Tim. iv., vers. 9-11).—"Luke, the beloved physician."

I. ST. LUKE was a physician. After a while he becomes a Christian physician. He becomes a physician to the souls as well as to the bodies of his fellow-men. And years after he had laboured for his Lord and Master by preaching the Gospel, and by his ministrations to the churches, St. Paul, whose great infirmities he doubtless had from time to time relieved, speaks of him as the beloved physician. It seems to me that in a Christian community, no one can be a physician in the fullest sense of the word, no one can have it in his power to minister

to his ailing brothers and sisters with the utmost efficacy, unless he is a Christian. We require, in a physician, one who is able to deal both with the outward mechanism of our bodies, and to play upon the invisible chords of the spirit, which, as they vibrate harmoniously or discordantly, determine whether order or disorder shall prevail in the sphere of our spiritual nature. We require, indeed, that our physicians shall be large-hearted, sympathetic, Christian men.

II. But our affection and love go out to St. Luke, not only because he was the beloved physician and the beloved friend of the Apostle Paul, but also because he was an Evangelist. We have his writings enshrined in our Church's sacred Book. The only Gospel hymns which the Church possesses are those which St. Luke has preserved for us. The hymn of the Baptist's father, the Song of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Song of Simeon—these are treasures which St. Luke has stored up for us in his holy Gospel.

III. The title "beloved physician" is St. Luke's for evermore. It is his title still. He is not severed from us. Heaven is no distant land, but lies all about the Lord's faithful ones. He who was once so true and faithful a servant of the Divine Physician of souls is a true and faithful servant now. He would not desire an idle and useless existence. He is glad to be one of those sent forth as ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation.

H. N. GRIMLEY, *Tremadoc Sermons*, p. 55.

REFERENCES: iv. 11.—E. W. Benson, *Three Sermons*, p. 1. iv. 14.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 216; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. viii., p. 9; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ix., p. 148; F. D. Maurice, *Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 270; J. Sherman, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 472. iv. 17.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xi., p. 144; F. E. Paget, *Sermons for Special Occasions*, p. 141; R. W. Dale, *Discourses on Special Occasions*, p. 324.

I. THESSALONIANS.

Chap. i., ver. 1.—"**Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the Church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.**"

I. THESSALONICA was a populous and wealthy city of Macedonia. As an important seaport it was the meeting place of Greek and Roman merchandise, and consequently the centre of widespread and commanding influence. Paul had twice attempted to revisit his Thessalonian friends, but he had failed. He had been prevented from personally seeing them. He therefore sent Timothy to make inquiries and report as to their general condition. Timothy brought back a favourable report of their Christian progress and steadfastness, and of their strong, ardent attachment to Paul. On receipt of these welcome tidings, the Apostle now writes them in words which reveal the thankfulness and the yearning love of his heart. But as there were certain unfavourable features in the report—neglect of daily duty because of erroneous views about the second coming: ignorant anxiety lest friends who had died should have no share in the gladness and glory of that advent, wrong views about spiritual gifts as in the Church at Corinth; danger of falling back into the mire of heathen profligacy; proneness to faint in view of the persecutions at the hand of their countrymen. The Apostle has also to use words of reproof, correction, and encouragement. These, intertwined with many reminiscences of his personal intercourse with them, are the sum and substance of an Epistle fraught with many similar counsels to us, "upon whom the ends of the world are come."

II. Paul's associating others with himself as he does in the text is a striking instance of the humility and tenderness of his heart. It is also a lesson of the fellowship of brethren one with another, of the brotherly kindness of one teacher towards another, and, last of all, of a teacher's familiar relation towards his scholar, his son in the faith.

The Church of the Thessalonians is described as being in God

the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ. Here we have the distinctive characteristic mark of a true church. There were heathen assemblies in the city, numerous and powerful. But the only true church was the Christian community. It had its hidden spiritual life with Christ in God.

J. HUTCHISON, *Lectures on Thessalonians*, p. 1.

Chap. i., vers. 1-3.—"Grace to you and peace," etc.

I. HERE we have the apostolic greeting in its most usual form —grace and peace—a blending of the ordinary Greek and Hebrew modes of salutation, "the union of Asiatic repose and European alacrity," which by apostolic use has become invested with a significance infinitely higher than that which was implied in the ordinary civilities of social life. These formulæ of friendly intercourse familiar to the ancient world were like some precious antique vase, prized for their beauty more than for their use. They had become empty of significance, or, at all events, entirely empty of blessing. But now they are lifted up into a higher service, consecrated to the noblest purpose,—henceforth brimful of holiest meaning—filled with the very water of life.

II. But this grace and peace is from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. It comes from God the Father as the Primal Source of all good, and it comes from Christ Jesus as the Mediating Source. Peace is the sign and seal of Christ's kingdom. Its subjects call God Father, because they have first called Christ Jesus Lord.

III. The apostolic thanksgiving suggests an example which it must be ours to imitate. Constant giving of thanks to God, that is a priestly function which every believer must discharge; that offering must be laid on the altar of every renewed heart. Not at times only are we to thank God on behalf both of ourselves and others, but evermore. One of the old Puritans has said: "Grace (*i.e.*, gratitude) is like a ring without end, and the diamond of this ring is constancy."

And as far the apostolic graces, faith and love and hope, have their several manifestations in work, toil, and patience, these suggest to us our duty and our dignity, till at length patience has her perfect work.

J. HUTCHISON, *Lectures on Thessalonians*, p. 13.

REFERENCES: i. 3.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxi., p. 115; *Homilist*, 4th series, vol. i., p. 46. i. 4.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 199.

Chap. i., vers. 4-6.

I. THE Apostle shows in these verses on what grounds his knowledge rested—his conviction of the Thessalonians' election—the fact and mode of their being chosen for privilege and duty. He was fully persuaded of it, both on subjective and on objective grounds. The power and assurance with which he and his fellow-labourers preached in Thessalonica, on the one hand, and the eagerness and joyfulness with which the inhabitants of the city listened, on the other, these were to him evidences of divine grace working both in speaker and hearers, proofs of God's having marked them out above others for His favour and service. The presence and energy of the Holy Spirit were recognised by him. Such was his sacred enthusiasm, that he felt his own words to be far more than the mere utterance of one earnest human spirit struggling to impress others; to be indeed nothing less than the urgent words of the Spirit Himself, the Spirit of all truth, witnessing through him, in behalf of Christ and His salvation.

II. The other evidence adduced for Paul's knowledge of the election of the Thessalonian Church is their selection for privilege and duty. The first was subjective, the freedom, and fulness, and power in the Holy Ghost with which he felt he had preached to them. The other is objective, the eager, joyful readiness with which they had received his preaching. Their having been chosen of God is shown by their having themselves chosen God's Gospel as offered to them. "Much suffering," indeed, in itself proves nothing in regard to Christian character and attainment. But much suffering with joy in the Holy Ghost does. The believer knows that the *via dolorosa* which he has to tread is a path of true joy when he recognises his Saviour's steps in it. Melanchthon used to write in his students' note-books "Kreutzesweg Lichtweg—the path of the cross the path of light"; and it was a favourite saying of Luther's, "If Christ wore a crown of thorns, why should His followers experience only a crown of roses?" The stream of Christian life has two currents, distinct yet united, of tribulation and joy, ever wending its course, troubled and calm to the ocean of eternity beyond.

J. HUTCHISON, *Lectures on Thessalonians*, p. 25.

REFERENCES: i. 5—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xi., No. 648; E. White, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xviii., p. 344; *Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. vii., p. 102.

Chap. i., vers. 7-10.

I. THE Thessalonian converts, having received the Gospel so heartily and held it so firmly, and having shown the influence which it exerted over their hearts and lives by their joy in the Holy Ghost, became ensamples to all that believed in Macedonia and Achaia. Collectively, for the word is in the singular, they became a pattern to others. Thessalonica was, as far as its Christian inhabitants were concerned, "a city set on an hill." A noble dignity, a sacred duty, a constant danger, all this is implied in such a coveted post of honour.

II. From some form or other of manifold idolatry every new man in Christ Jesus turns to God as the one blissful centre of his renewed life. Hence the Apostle proceeds to define the purpose of this conversion, or turning to God. It is twofold. It is (1) to serve the living and true God, and (2) to wait for his Son from heaven. The one clause distinguishes the Thessalonian Church from the heathen; the other from the Jews. But they do more. They represent the universal Christian life in its two most common aspects—service and expectation. It is a life of ceaseless action because it is also a life of patient waiting. It is a life of much affliction in the service of God, because it is also a life of joy in the Holy Ghost, joyful looking forward to the coming of the Son of God from heaven, bringing His reward with Him. It is this hope which, on the one hand, gives strength for service and perseverance in it, and it is the faithful engaging in this service which, on the other hand, justifies and consecrates this hope. Service without its accompanying hope would merge into dry and formal routine. Hope without its service, its ministry, and love, would pass into indolent sentiment, or into restless, hysterical excitement. While the faithful at Thessalonica did not in any way lose sight of the Saviour's incarnation, and death, and resurrection, the "much affliction" of their present lot led them to live much in the future, to long and look for His coming again as the "just and gentle Monarch, to terminate the evil and diadem the right."

J. HUTCHISON, *Lectures on Thessalonians*, p. 38.

REFERENCES: i. 8.—J. Owen, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xv., p. 273. i. 9, 10.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxx., No. 1806.

Chap. ii., vers. 1-4.

I. IN view of what he had already undergone, and in anticipation of renewed suffering, St. Paul was "bold" in declaring

in Thessalonica the whole counsel of God, keeping nothing back. He was all this, too, in the midst of "much contention"—that is, much external conflict and danger from his Jewish and Gentile opponents, and also internal struggles. The secret of this boldness was his realising his message as the Gospel of God,—good news from God Himself, a message from God. Hence, even in the presence of this world's potentates, as God's ambassador, "a legate of the skies," he was bold. He relied on his credentials. He was emboldened by the thought of the trust committed to him. Self-reliance is found in relying upon God.

II. "Our exhortation." There is much implied in the choice of this term to represent the apostolic ministry of the word. It means more than simple teaching. It is teaching tinged with emotion. The word thus suggested, as it is, of affectionate comfort and counsel, is specially adapted to the circumstances of the Thessalonian believers. The Apostle in the tenderness of his heart yearns over them in their dangers and trials. His sympathy breathes forth even from the very words he employs.

III. After disclaiming all wrong, corrupt elements in his "exhortation," the Apostle proceeds to describe positively the nature, the manner of his teaching. "But as we were allowed"—*i.e.*, approved—"of God, to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak." He claims for himself in these words a Divine commission. Not that he or any one can ever be chosen of God to salvation and honour because of ability to stand the test of Divine scrutiny. No: that scrutiny, that testing, can reveal nothing but unworthiness. Yet there is a sense in which God does scrutinise His own people, setting aside some and approving others for special work. There are those who, having been proved faithful in little, are exalted to higher posts of service, and also to greater exposure to danger. Thus it was with Paul; first proved, then approved, and so entrusted with the Gospel. The reward of past labour and suffering is simply renewed opportunity for labouring and suffering more.

J. HUTCHISON, *Lectures on Thessalonians*, p. 50.

REFERENCES: ii. 4. — R. Thomas, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 33. ii. 5.—*Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xviii., p. 193.

Chap. ii., vers. 5-9.

THE Apostle is very careful in describing the relation in which his ministry stood to the Thessalonians, to defend himself against all false charges, all insinuations or suspicions of insincerity or impurity of motive. There was no element of

imposture or covetousness or guile in his ministry. Accredited from on high, he pleased not men, but God. It was enough for him, in seeking the good of his fellow-men, to be approved by Him who proveth His servants' hearts.

I. He disdains the use of flattery. His exhortation was rather the word of simple unadulterated truth. Had his designs been self-seeking, he would have made use of flattery as one of the easiest keys for opening the door of the weak human heart. His teaching had for its aim first to wound, that, like Ithuriel's spear, it might afterwards heal.

II. It is a short and natural step for the Apostle's thought to pass from flattery to that which is the essence, the very soul of all flattery, covetousness: that form of self-interest which is sure to show itself in flattering words. He appeals to God, as if he had said, God knows, and what He knows He will at length testify, so that you too may know that with no plausible words, but in words of sincerity and simplicity, I have preached unto you.

III. He passes by with disdain as an element of his exhortation aught of ambition, desire for glory. "Not of men sought we glory." His aim was not the honour of men, but the approval of God. The scroll on the shield of the man of the world is, "I follow fame." On that of Paul it was "Rather use than fame."

IV. But the Apostle's yearning towards his Thessalonian friends showed itself further in self-abnegation, in willingness to impart "also our own souls." That heart of his, which was restless till it rested in Christ, ceaselessly sent forth its love, henceforth sanctified in Christ's love, towards others. He illustrated in himself the truth of the old Italian proverb, "The teacher is like the candle which gives light to others by consuming itself."

J. HUTCHISON, *Lectures on Thessalonians*, p. 62.

Chap. ii., vers. 10-12.

THERE are two points to be noted here in this comparison instituted by Paul between his conduct and that of a father.

I. He could say, as a wise father suits his dealings, both in training and teaching, to the case, the requirements of each child, so he acted towards his converts, "every one of you." It was no general relation in which he stood to them. He dealt with each individual soul. He adapted his teaching to each case, giving to each a portion in due season. The religion of

Jesus Christ takes account of each, tenderly deals with each, and thus advances till the number of His people be gathered in. Its foundation rests on individual conviction. Individualism, not multitudinism, is the word that represents the law of its growth. It makes its appeal to each separate conscience, and it is only in so far as it does so, that it comes to leaven the whole mass of human society.

II. But the other point in the comparison here made is, as a father is eager, intensely earnest, in giving his children right guidance and instruction, so was Paul in his yearning care of his converts. As he had described his general behaviour in three terms, so he describes his ministry in a threefold way. He says—exhorted and comforted and charged. Each one brought under the range of his influence was dealt with in the way most suited to his case; that so all might walk worthy of God, who hath called them unto His own kingdom and glory: one member of the Church needing exhortation, a second comfort, and a third solid charging. But the end aimed at in them all is one and the same, a walking worthy of their calling from on high. Believers walk worthy of their destiny and glory when they lovingly look forward to it, when they are longing of heart,

> "Send hope before to grasp it
> Till hope be lost in sight."

And we can rightly look forward to it only when we strive in Divine strength to prepare for it.

J. HUTCHISON, *Lectures on Thessalonians*, p. 75.

REFERENCE: ii. 13.—E. Cooper, *Practical Sermons*, vol. i., p. 1.

Chap. ii., vers. 13-16.

I. IN this passage the Apostle states the evidence of the effectual working of the word in the Thessalonian converts. The change it had wrought in them was genuine, for it withstood trial. This is the test of a right acceptance of the truth. The Thessalonian Church was one of the earliest in Palestine to testify their faithfulness in the furnace of affection. They were being exercised in what Melanchthon used to say was the best of the three schools in which a Christian must be trained —the school of suffering. Those of prayer and meditation, he said, were good, but that of trial was the most fruitful of them all. It was so in apostolic times. It was so in the

times of the Reformation. It is so still. The way of cross-bearing is the way of light. Christ's people need to be taught how noble a thing it is to suffer and be strong.

II. The Apostle now turns aside from his theme. He makes a digression. He "goes off" (Jowett) upon the word "Jews" to describe the evil deeds and the merited doom of his own countrymen. The culminating point in Jewish wickedness is the casting out and murder of their Messiah, the Son of God. With fearful perseverance, "alway," alike before Christ came, when He had come, and after He was gone, they had been filling up the measure of their guilt. The archangel of judgment, with his sword-arm free, was already approaching,—so near indeed, that in anticipation the Apostle could say, "For the wrath *is* come upon them to the uttermost." Hardly fourteen years after the date of this epistle, it overtook them with a sudden surprise—it descended in the doom of fire upon the once sacred city, the entire overthrow and extinction of the Jewish state, the dispersion of the race, and the centuries of weary wandering appointed them, which are not yet closed. That was the *dies iræ* for the Jews, and foreshadowing of the wrath to come. They who belong to God's own kingdom and glory, on the other hand, while they see in the fearful judgment which befell the Jews a distinct and manifest type of another and final judgment, wait for Jesus, who is delivering them from the wrath to come.

J. HUTCHISON, *Lectures on Thessalonians*, p. 84.

REFERENCES: ii. 14.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. iii., p 301. ii. 16. Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 225.

Chap. ii., vers. 17-20.

I. THE Thessalonian Christians were peculiarly the Apostle's hope, being regarded by him, not simply as a conspicuous part of the reward in glory which was in store for him, but also his hope in connection with his present earthly work. Their conversion, their steadfastness in the faith, was largely that on which he built his hopes, under God, of the further progress of the Gospel in Europe. He hoped that yet increasingly from them would sound out the word of the Lord. They were, further, his joy, inasmuch as in their conversion and consistent Christian conduct he saw the evidence that his own labour had not been in vain in the Lord. They were a credit to him in the sight of God and men. Hence, amid all his sorrows, he felt that in them he could find his joy. They were even more to

him. They were his crown of holy boasting, for they would prove at last his wreath of victory, his chaplet of ceaseless rejoicing.

II. In the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming, Paul's crown of a good name in the presence of Christ Jesus was his converts—those who by his instrumentality had been brought to a knowledge of the truth. The same crown is offered to us all, and is in keeping for us all, if we be but faithful. History tells us that when in Philip II.'s reign a rebel claimed and gained the crown of Granada, he bore at the ceremony of coronation in his right hand a banner bearing the inscription: "More I could not desire, less would not have contented me." These words cease to be presumptuous and become the utterance of truest wisdom only when they are the Christian's, and refer to the crown of heavenly rejoicing, and when they are the legend of the banner under which he fights, in "the sacramental host of God's elect."

J. HUTCHISON, *Lectures on Thessalonians*, p. 94

Chap. ii., ver. 18.—"Satan hindered us."

I. THERE is a hinderer. Not only are there hindrances, there is a personal hinderer. He is not visible, he is not persuadable, he must be resisted.

II. This hinderer assails the most eminent workers in the Church. He assailed the Saviour Himself. In this case he hindered Paul. We are apt to think that the greatest men in the Church escape temptations which fall to the lot of others. The greater the man, the greater the temptation. (1) Our temptations show our unity as members of a common race. (2) Our temptations should awaken our sympathies as partakers of a common suffering.

III. The hinderer seeks to foil the aggressive intentions of the Christian. In being a hinderer the enemy has a decided advantage. (1) It is easy to hinder, that is, to do mischief, to suggest difficulties, to magnify obstacles, etc. (2) It is easier to hinder than to counteract.

Application: Satan comes to us sometimes through the medium of bad men; (2) sometimes through the gratification of apparently harmless wishes; (3) sometimes through friendly but incapable advisers—men who are so far below our level as utterly to miscalculate and misunderstand us.

PARKER, *City Temple*, vol. ii., p. 23.

REFERENCES: ii. 18.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xi., No. 657; *Ibid.*, *Evening by Evening*, p. 221; Parker, *Hidden Springs*, p. 203.

Chap. ii., vers. 19, 20.

I. THE text points to the future. Paul loved the Thessalonians; he made mention of them in his prayers. He remembered without ceasing their work of faith, their labour of love, their patience and hope. Instead of indulging in fond regrets, and lamenting the severance of old ties, and giving himself up to the fascination of sentimental reminiscences, he looks onward to the future cheerfully, anticipating renewed fellowship, calculating upon continued usefulness. His view extends to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The death of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, the ascension of Christ—these facts threw majestic shadows over the life path of believers, and were to them fountains of enthusiastic inspiration; but the coming of the Lord Jesus was the bright hope which fixed their eyes and filled their hearts.

II. The text recognises an everlasting bond of union between a Christian pastor and his flock. What is said here implies a mutual recognition at the last day. The true minister toils for eternity. The result of his employment will not appear till time shall end. Many kinds of effort in this life produce immediate results; they can be at once detected and recorded. But not so with what comes of our sacred occupation. The harvest is the end of the world; the reapers are the angels.

III. The text suggests the conditions on which the Apostolic hope may be fulfilled. (1) The conversion of men to Christ through their repentance and faith, through their experience of the change which the Gospel alone describes, which the Gospel alone effects,—that is, the new birth. (2) A second ground on which such felicity rests is the edification, the improvement, the growth in holiness of those so converted. (3) The consolation of the afflicted in this world of trial will add to the crown of rejoicing. The strongest of all ministerial power is sympathy in sorrow.

J. STOUGHTON, *Penny Pulpit*, New Series, No. 792.

REFERENCES: ii. 19, 20.—*Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 241; R. Davey, *Ibid.*, vol. xi., p. 282; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 452; J. Vaughan, *Fifty Sermons*, 6th series, p. 81.

Chap. iii., vers. 1-5.

I. THE purpose of Timothy's mission to the Thessalonians was to establish,—to make them steadfast in the midst of persecution, to make them rooted and grounded in love, to make their very trials serve that all-important end, that they, as a church, might cast forth roots like Lebanon. The work of establishing them

is, strictly speaking, God's work. But it is here none the less ascribed to Timothy, spoken of as his work, because he is a fellow-labourer with God.

II. The reason for the "steadfast endurance" is given in the words which follow: "For yourselves, know that we are appointed thereunto." This knowledge they had, both from apostolic teaching and their own personal experience, the knowledge that tribulation is the common lot of Christ's people. The world's scorn and enmity cannot fail to be excited by the Christian's character and conduct. Hence, holiness entails suffering as well as sin does, for sin will, in some way or other, persecute it.

III. In every case of resistance to the Tempter there is new accession of spiritual strength to the believer himself. In fighting the good fight of faith, in overcoming the Evil One, we gain new power. As the South Sea islanders imagine that the prowess and valour of the enemies they slay in battle pass over into themselves, so in truth is it with the soldiers of the Cross. The very force and strength of the temptations which he overthrows become his own. Therefore the exhortation of Ignatius, in his epistle to Polycarp, has a meaning for all time: "Stand firm as the anvil under its repeated blows; for a great combatant must not only be buffeted, but must also prevail."

J. HUTCHISON, *Lectures on Thessalonians*, p. 105.

REFERENCES: iii. 2.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vi., p. 321. iii. 5.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 55. iii. 6.—J. Irons, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 197.

Chap. iii., vers. 6-10.

I. THE Apostle now tells us that, on Timothy's return from his mission, bearing good tidings of the Thessalonian Church, he had been comforted. The new-born joy, the tender love of his heart, lies like a gleam of light upon the very words he employs. He was comforted to learn that, amid all the darkness of their tribulation, their faith, like the night-blooming Ceres-flower, lived and spread abroad its fragrance. The good tidings which cheered his heart were also about the attitude of his friends to himself, their teacher. This he puts last; as, however precious in his own personal estimation, it is of slight importance compared to their remaining steadfast in faith and love.

II. What is implied in the steadfastness of a Christian

Church? (1) That individually and collectively the members of it are in the Lord—abiding in Him, both in faith and in practice. (2) That while "in the Lord" they are exposed to the danger of wavering. The language seems military. It suggests the idea of conflict. Christ's Church, every section of it, is exposed to assault. The army of the living God is subject to having its ranks broken into. This is the aim of the Tempter, of whom the Apostle has just been speaking.

III. The Apostle's joy rose from the contemplation of the state of others. In the highest sense, therefore, it was disinterested. It was a joy, further, which arose from the contemplation of the *spiritual* state of others. It was a pure joy, free from aught of earthly alloy.

IV. Believers, whatever may be their eminence in the Christian graces, have still "lacking measures of their faith." They need to be perfected in knowledge and in practice, if they would rightly be owned as the Gospel net for the bringing in of others. They need ceaselessly to be repaired, built up, if, as the Church of Christ, the ark of all safety, they would withstand all the rude billows of the world. Thus, fillling up or perfecting that which is lacking in faith on earth, Christ's Church will at last pass into heaven, where there will be nothing that is lacking in glory.

J. HUTCHISON, *Lectures on Thessalonians*, p. 105.

REFERENCE: iii. 8.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxx., No. 1758.

Chap. iii., vers. 11-13.

I. WE have to notice very carefully to whom this ejaculatory prayer is addressed: Now God Himself, even our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. It is quite evident that our Lord and Saviour, the Man Christ Jesus, the ascended and glorified Redeemer, is in the Apostle's thought viewed as standing in the same relation to human prayer as God the Father. The prayer of Paul's heart is addressed to both. While our Lord is distinguished from the Father in personality, He is one with Him in godhead, and therefore is He rightly addressed in the language of prayer. Prayer is the voice of human weakness addressed to infinite power.

II. The circle of Christian love, the sphere of its influence, is wide as humanity itself. There is to be no limit to its diffusion. Christianity has broken down all barriers of race or of creed. The question "Who is my neighbour?" ought never to be uttered by Christian lips. Increasing and abounding in love may be regarded as the end of all Christian striving, for

after all it is the possession of this grace which brings men on earth nearest to the gates of heaven. But it is represented in the present connection rather as an end than as a means. "To the end He may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness." He would teach them that Christian love, going out towards others in blessing, comes back again laden with new blessings to the soul. The hearts of Christ's people become in this way established. The heart in this way becomes united. Such a loving heart diffuses the fragrance of its own sweet life, the life of holiness, and is thus rewarded by being declared blameless, and that too in the sight of God.

III. Even amid the imperfections and limitations of earth and time, something of this experience is the believer's possession. But none the less the more advanced he is in the Divine life, the more is he conscious of doubts and waverings of heart, the more does he feel himself blameworthy, the more does he mourn over his unholiness in the sight of God his Father. Hence the Apostle in the closing clause carries our thoughts forward to that

> "one far-off Divine event,
> To which the whole creation moves."

Then truly and fully are Christ's people before God, even their Father, beholding the King's face.

J. HUTCHISON, *Lectures on Thessalonians*, p. 127.

REFERENCES: iii. 11-13.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vi., p. 257. iii. 12, 13.—*Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 420. iii.—E. H. Higgins, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 221. iv. 1.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 89; *Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. iv., p. 9. iv. 9, 10.—E. W. Benson, *Three Sermons*, p. 26.

Chap. iv., vers. 9-12.

TURNING now, and as it were, with a sense of relief from warnings against impurity and covetousness, but still keeping in view the aim of his whole exhortation, viz., "the will of God, even your sanctification," the Apostle resumes the subject of brotherly love. The cultivation of the Christian graces is the best safeguard against any relapse on the part of believers into the besetting sins of the Gentile world. It is here said that the Thessalonian Christians abounded in the grace of love. It was their crown of glory.

I. Their love had a wide sphere for its activity. All their brother Christians throughout the whole of Macedonia had been

revived and comforted by it. Paul learned this, doubtless, from Timothy's report. But what form did this brotherly intercourse assume? Possibly the circulation of Luke's Gospel, in whole or in part, to which honourable work Thessalonica appears to have been directly called. But this brotherly love also manifested itself in pecuniary assistance rendered to those who were in want. The hearts of many brethren in Macedonia were blessing their benevolence.

II. None the less, Paul wrote to them, "But we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more." Their brotherly love was to show its life in continuous growth. There can be no halting-point in this, or in any other Christian grace.

III. Idleness is a foe to all growth in grace. Spenser speaks of "sluggish idlenesse, the nurse of sinne." It is the very cancer of the soul. Activity, on the other hand, if it be in the line of duty, even means progress. God helps the worker, and looks after him. The Christian must be ever ready to assist others, but he must never be ready unnecessarily to be assisted by others. Others' needs he must recognise as his own special burden, but his own special burden he is not to be eager to put on others.

J. HUTCHISON, *Lectures on Thessalonians*, p. 150.

Chap. iv., ver. 10.—"We beseech you, brethren that ye increase more and more."

CHRISTIAN Growth.

I. In what are we to increase? There is little or no advantage in the increase of some things. It but increases our danger, and, adding to our cares, lays weightier burdens on the back of life. More riches will certainly not make us happier; and perhaps, paradoxical as it may sound, they may not even make us richer. Nor is the increase even of wisdom, though a higher and nobler pursuit, without its own drawbacks. It is harder to work with the brain than with the hands; to hammer out thoughts than iron. It is not increase of these things at which the text calls us to aim; but of such riches as makes it less difficult, and more easy, to get to heaven; of the wisdom that humbles rather than puffs up its possessor. It is the increase of those spiritual endowments which are catalogued by St. Paul as being the fruits of the Spirit.

II. How are we to increase in these? (1) We are to increase equally. All our graces are to be cultivated to the neglect of none of them. If one side of a tree grows, and the

other does not, the tree acquires a crooked form, is a misshapen thing. Analogous in its results to this is the unequal growth of Christian graces. The finest specimen of a Christian is he, in whom all the graces, like the strings of an angel's harp, are in most perfect harmony. (2) We are to increase constantly. Slow and silent growth is a thing which you can neither see nor hear; while the higher a believer rises, his ascent becomes not more difficult, but more easy, he never reaches a point where progress ceases. Begun on earth, it is continued in heaven; the field that lies before us, stretching beyond the grave, and above the stars, illimitable as space, and endless as eternity. (3) We are to make efforts to grow. While all our hopes of salvation centre in the cross of Christ, and all our hopes of progress hang on the promised aid of the Holy Spirit, let us exert ourselves to the utmost, reaching forth to higher attainments, and aiming at daily increase in every holy and Christian habit.

T. GUTHRIE, *The Way to Life*, p. 264.

Chap. iv., vers. 10, 11.—"We beseech you . . . that ye study to be quiet and to do your own business," etc.

I. IN what forms must we labour to advance Christ's Kingdom? In age after age the saints of God have possessed their souls in joy and patience, not gadding about as busy-bodies or other people's bishops, but doing quietly their humble duty, and spending peacefully their holy lives. It has never, in any age, been possible for God's servants to look round them without sorrow. Is there any consolation under this state of things? There is this consolation, that in spite of ourselves, and in spite of our traditional theology, we are driven to trust and hope in God, that He did make the world, and He who made it will guide. Man must do his duty, but man cannot do the work of Providence, and therefore he must wait in quietness and hope. When Saint Francis of Assisi was troubled and disquieted about the great Order which he had founded, and into which the elements of evil began early to intrude, he dreamed that God came to him in a vision of the night, and said, "Poor little man, why dost thou trouble thyself? Thinkest thou not that I am able, if I will it, to protect and keep thy Order?"

II. Let us, then, as our help against morbid anxiety, leading, as it so often does, to spurious excitement, let us remember always that the world is in God's hands, not in the devil's, and

not at all in ours; and further, that things may not be so bad as they seem to us. If you ask me what you are to do, I answer, Join in any part of Christ's work, so wide, so blessed, so truly humble. Choose it wisely; join in it heartily; let there be no single life among you which is a life of mere easy self-indulgence, but let every life be consciously dedicated to the service of others, and ready to make sacrifices for their good. Keep your own consciences free from the stain of shame of having added to the world's guilt and misery by the greed of your selfishness, by the baseness of your passions, or by the bitterness of your hate. Show thus actively and passively that you fear God, and love your brother-man, and you may be doing infinitely more, and infinitely more blessed and permanent work for Christ than if you took on yourself to teach, it may be, before you have ever learned, or with loud proclamations of your own conversion set up yourself as a blind leader of the blind. Remember that the vast majority of Christians are simply called to do their duty in the state of life to which God has called them.

F. W. FARRAR, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxii., p. 33.

REFERENCES: iv. 10, 11.—H. J. Wilmot-Buxton, *Waterside Mission Sermons*, No. 13. iv. 11.—A. Craig, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 330; W. Dorling, *Ibid.*, vol. viii., p. 120. iv. 11, 12.—W. Braden, *Ibid.*, vol. ix., p. 33; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. viii., p. 99. iv. 13.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. viii., p. 275; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 232.

Chap. iv., vers. 13, 14.—**"I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep," etc.**

THE Sleep of the Faithful Departed.

St. Paul, in the text, speaks of the saints unseen as of those that "sleep in Jesus"; and Christians are wont to call their burial-grounds cemeteries or sleeping-places, where they laid up their beloved ones to sleep on and take their rest. Let us therefore see why we should thus speak of those whom we call the dead.

I. First, it is because we know that they shall wake up again. What sleep is to waking, death is to the resurrection. It is only a prelude, a transitory state ushering in a mightier power of life; therefore death is called sleep, to show that it has a fixed end coming. It is a kindly, soothing rest to the wearied and world-worn spirit: and there is a fixed end to its duration. There is a waking nigh at hand, so that the grave is little more than the longest night's sleep in the life of an undying soul

II. Again, death is changed to sleep, because they whom men call dead do really live unto God. When the coil of this body is loosed death has done all, and his power is spent; thenceforth and for ever the sleeping soul lives mightily unto God.

III. And once more, those whom the world calls dead are sleeping, because they are taking their rest. Their rest is not the rest of a stone, cold and lifeless, but of wearied humanity. They "sleep in Jesus." Theirs is a bliss only less perfect than the glory of His kingdom when the new creation shall be accomplished. Consider a few thoughts which follow from what has been said. (1) We ought to mourn rather for the living than for the dead. The passing of the soul is awful even to the saints. Wherefore let no man weep for the dead; that awful change for them is over. They have fulfilled their task, ours tarrieth. (2) It is life, rather than death, that we ought to fear. For life and all it contains—thought and speech and deed and will—is a deeper and more awful mystery. Let us fear life and we shall not be afraid to die; for in the new creation of God death walks harmless.

H. E. MANNING, *Sermons*, vol. i., p. 308.

REFERENCES: iv. 13, 14.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ix., p. 278; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. ii., p. 390.

Chap. iv., vers. 13-15.

THE Apostle now turns to speak of Christian hope. It is a transition to a new and all-important theme—the hope of the Christian in regard to the saints at the second coming of their Lord. The coming of the glorified Saviour is, as it were, the red thread running through the whole tissue of these two epistles. It is more or less prominent in all its parts, giving the whole its colouring and plan.

I. The Gospel has revealed to man the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, and the re-union in Heaven of long-divided hearts. The Apostle thus exhorts believers to cherish feelings in regard to departed friends of a far different kind from those which took gloomy possession of heathen breasts. Christ's people are "as sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing." The eye of their faith can see the bright light in the cloud of even the heaviest earthly trial. They do not refuse to shed tears, but they also do not refuse to dry them at their Saviour's bidding.

II. The Apostle gives one reason why Christian sorrow in

presence of death is to be different from that of the others. It lies in the threefold repetition in this passage of the word "asleep," as applied to the Christian dead, a figure possibly suggested here by our Lord's own parable of the ten virgins, the imagery in both passages being the same. It was generally thought among the Thessalonian Christians that at the Lord's second and glorious coming, the departed saints—the resurrection not having then taken place—would not have a share in the peculiar joys of meeting with Him, and greeting Him on His return to earth. That joy, they thought, would only be shared in by the living. The Apostle bids them not be sunk in sorrow about their absent friends. If these had been among those on earth who had clung through reproach to the crucified One, they would assuredly not be torn from His fellowship when He came in glory. They are not severed from their Lord now; they cannot be severed from Him when He comes again.

J. HUTCHISON, *Lectures on Thessalonians*, p. 163.

REFERENCE: iv. 13-18.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iii., p. 273.

Chap. iv., ver. 14.—"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him."

THE Intermediate State.

I. Where are the saints? and what are they doing? And the Spirit answers, they "sleep in Jesus." Now you must not for a moment understand this expression as though it meant that the spirits of the sainted dead are passing the interval, till the resurrection, in a state of unconsciousness or inactivity. The idea is utterly abhorrent alike to feeling, to reason, and to Scripture. For we can conceive no idea of soul but in the motion of thought and feeling. A soul without consciousness is a contradiction in terms. Even here thought never ceases; nor is it possible that God would have been at such amazing pains to make and remake a being for His glory and then consign that being for thousands, it may be, of years, to a condition in which he cannot glorify Him. And St. Paul himself speaks conclusively, at the beginning of his Epistle to the Philippians, when he compares and balances those two things—to remain for the Church's sake, or to die and be with Christ. Now it would be no question of balance at all if he did not expect assuredly to be consciously happy with Christ; for then to remain and serve the Church, would it not be unquestionably better than to be passing that same period in a useless and joyless suspension of all life and power?

II. Let us follow, if we may catch a glimpse of, the untrammelled spirit. The word of God is distinct that it is passed into Paradise—"To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise"—by which we are to understand, not heaven—Elijah only of all the saints is said to have gone to heaven, and that, it may be, because his spirit was never separated from his body—but we are to understand some happy place (the word means garden, and associates itself therefore in the mind with the first Eden) where the separate spirits of the just are with Jesus, awaiting His second coming and their bodies, after which they are to enter into that final and perfect glory, which we call heaven. For neither they without us, nor we without them, shall be made perfect; but all the people of God, of every age, will go into heaven together. Till then, we are instructed to believe that the souls of the faithful "sleep in Jesus"—the word may mean with Jesus, or more strictly, through Jesus—in Paradise.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 1874, p. 55.

REFERENCES: iv. 14.—*Christian World Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 472; *Ibid.*, vol. xxii., p. 308; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 213; Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 181. iv. 16.—J. Vaughan, *Children's Sermons*, vol. vi., p. 106.

Chap. iv., vers. 16-18.

THE Apostle draws aside yet more the curtain of futurity. He increases and confirms the comfort which "by the word of the Lord" he offers to believers, by revealing additional truth about the resurrection day. "For the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout." There are three accompaniments of His coming. (1) A shout, an authoritative shout, one that indicates command. "Behold the Bridegroom cometh: go ye out to meet Him." Here we have the very command which, once uttered, must be obeyed: the command which not only musters the retinue of angels and glorified saints, but also summons all men, of every age and race, to meet their God. (2) "The voice of the archangel." Angels have been ready and will be again. Christ's ministering spirits. In regard to the *voice* of the archangel here, Scripture gives us no hint. It may be the shout of command caught up by him from the lips of the Lord Himself and repeated to the gathering hosts. (3) "The trump of God." Under the old dispensation there is special prominence assigned to the trumpet as an instrument consecrated to religious uses. The last trump will call together the rejoicing saints into the heavenly Sion. It will be a signal of weal or woe, according to the character of

those who hear. It is worth while appending Bishop Alexander's note on verse 16:—"Of all the solemn associations connected with the verse, few can surpass the following, recorded in many of the foreign papers of the day: At the earthquake of Manilla, the cathedral fell upon the clergy and congregation. The mass of ruin overhead and around the doomed assemblage was kept for a time from crushing down upon them by some peculiarity of construction. Those outside were able to hear what was going on in the church, without the slightest possibility of clearing away the ruins or of aiding those within, upon whom the building must evidently fall before long. A low, deep bass voice, doubtless that of the priest officiating, was heard uttering the words, 'Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.' As this sentence came forth the multitude burst into a passion of tears, which was soon choked. For some deep groans issued from within, apparently wrung from the speaker by intense pain, and then the same voice spoke again in a calm and even tone, as if addressing a congregation, and all heard the words, 'The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first.'" An incident of this kind shows us how, in every age of the Church's history, and in circumstances of the most awful extremity, the comfort which the Apostle offers to the Thessalonians has in no way lost its power.

J. HUTCHISON, *Lectures on Thessalonians*, p. 176.

REFERENCES: iv. 16-18.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. iv., p. 260. iv. 17.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxiii., No. 1374; *Ibid.*, *Morning by Morning*, p. 345; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. viii., p. 364; *Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. i., p. 94.

Chap. iv., ver. 18.—"Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

PERSONAL Identity in the Resurrection.

I. The context states the identity of the saint after the resurrection and before it. We shall be the same persons hereafter that we are here. It is a very true and simple thing to say, and yet if we think of it, it includes a truth that throws a wonderful light on the future state of the saint, and answers many of the questions which a devout curiosity naturally asks concerning the future. The identity of the saint here and hereafter, as one and the same person, is involved in the phrase that we shall be raised again. We, not other beings in our name and place, but *we*, in our actual personal identity, shall be raised to life again at the last day. (1) Our bodies will be the same. I do not say materially the same, and that the very

identical atoms which compose our frame of flesh *now* will compose our frame *then*. For we are told that these are always changing, and are never quite the same two hours together. (2) Our mental and moral selves will be the same. Whatever is part of our being will survive in a higher state. We shall be ourselves still. We shall be ever with the Lord.

II. From this follows, I think, without a doubt, the truth of mutual recognition and of society in the better world. Sociability is of God, and will be, I believe, a new channel through which we shall enjoy Him. It is our sinfulness, and our sinfulness alone, that ever sets our love to each other, and our love to God in opposition. They will be harmonised in heaven, when both the body and the soul will be pervaded, penetrated with God, and every feeling, every affection, every thought, will be a new revelation of His glory. The Apostle does not say, *I* shall be ever with the Lord, or you, singly and individually, but *we*. He is writing to converts, for whom he expresses the tenderest affection, and to whom he says, "Ye are our glory and joy"; and can the idea of their society have possibly been absent from his mind, when he wrote the words, "*we* shall be ever with the Lord"?

E. GARBETT, *Experiences of the Inner Life*, p. 288.

REFERENCES: iv. 18.—G. Prothero, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 249. v. 1.—F. W. Farrar, *Ibid.*, vol. xiv., p. 85..

Chap. v., vers. 1-8.

I. THE Apostle having disclosed much in the foregoing verses about the Lord's second coming, and the respective shares in its glory which are to fall to those of His people who are then asleep, and those of them who are then alive, and remain, and having shown that the one class will not be more highly favoured than the other, proceeds now to declare to his readers that, having such assured knowledge, they have enough. It is not for them in a spirit of mere curiosity to pry into the times and seasons when these things shall be. Christ has willed it that, certain of His eventual arrival, we should remain in uncertainty as to its destined moment.

II. The path of God's people is as the shining light. It cannot, then, be that that day should overtake them as a thief; the day of the Lord, loved and longed for, can never actually come upon them as something unwelcome—disliked, dreaded. The very statement of their character and privilege is thus, on the part of the Apostle, an earnest appeal addressed to them. To

those who are watchful, sober, armed, the Saviour's own promise will at length be fulfilled, when He comes in His glory: "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you."

J. HUTCHISON, *Lectures on Thessalonians*, p. 189.

REFERENCES: v. 2.—R. D. B. Rawnsley, *Village Sermons*, 1st series, p. 159; H. P. Liddon, *Advent Sermons*, vol. i., p. 368. v. 4.—F. W. Farrar, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxii, p. 1; H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, vol. xxvi., p 27; R. H. Newton, *Ibid.*, vol. xxviii., p. 378. v. 5.—A. Macleod, *Talking to the Children*, p. 93. v. 6.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. ii., No. 64; vol. iii., No. 163; vol. xvii., No. 1022; *Ibid.*, *Morning by Morning*, p. 65; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 137. v. 7, 8.—T. H. Pattison, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 380.

Chap. v., ver. 8.—**"Let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation."**

THE Work and Armour of the Children of the Day.

I. First, this central injunction, into which all the moral teaching drawn from the second coming of Christ is gathered—"Let us be sober." Now, I do not suppose we are altogether to omit any reference to the literal meaning of this word. The context seems to show that by its reference to night as the season for drunken orgies. But, passing from that, let us turn to the higher subject with which the Apostle is here evidently mainly concerned. What is the meaning of the exhortation "Be sober"? Well, first let me tell you what I think is not the meaning of it. It does not mean an unemotional absence of fervour in your Christian character. Paul, the very man that is exhorting here to sobriety, was the very type of an enthusiast all his life. So Festus thought him mad, and even in the Church at Corinth there were some to whom, in his fervour, he seemed to be "beside himself." The exhortation means, as I take it, mainly this: the prime Christian duty of self-restraint in the use and the love of all earthly treasures and pleasures.

II. There is, secondly, a motive which backs up and buttresses this exhortation. "Let us, who are of the day"—or, as the Revised Version has it a little more emphatically and correctly, "Let us, since we are of the day, be sober." "Ye are the children of the day." There is one direction especially in which the Apostle thinks that that consideration ought to tell, and that is the direction of its self-restraint. *Noblesse oblige!* The aristocracy are bound to do nothing low or dishonourable. The children of the light are not to stain their hands with anything

foul. Chambering and wantonness, slumber and drunkenness, the indulgence in the appetites of the flesh,—all that may be fitting for the night, it is clean incongruous with the day.

III. Last of all, my text points out for us a method by which this great precept may be fulfilled :—"Putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation." And in like manner the cultivation of faith, charity, and hope is the best means for securing the exercise of sober self-control.

A. MACLAREN, *A Year's Ministry*, 1st series, p. 29.

THE Duty of Seriousness.

To attain to a true Christian gladness, we must learn to be serious, to be sober.

I. The two great elements indispensable to the existence of a really grand character are elasticity and steadfastness : elasticity, without which a man gets crushed by every slight failure ; and steadfastness, without which he will be turned aside from his purpose by unworthy motives, and be tempted to forget the end of his efforts in the contemplation of the means by which they could be attained. For keeping alive this elasticity, a man must know how to be wisely gay ; for keeping up this steadfastness, he must know how to be sober.

II. And so Christian sobriety must be based upon a reasonable estimate of the importance of life and the seriousness of all things here below. The trifler, who has no higher ambition than to amuse himself, mistakes the meaning of all things on earth. But as a man lays hold on the fact that God loves him and all men, and that, with all his weakness and inconstancy, he is yet not left unsupported by the Spirit's grace,—though he may be serious he will not be sad. Christian sobriety and Christian gaiety have their sources lying closely side by side in the devout and earnest soul ; and, like the Danube and the Rhine, which start out from different sides of the same glacier, and then diverge as far as the east is from the west, so these two, however much they seem to be at variance when they take a separate course, yet have their true founts in a living faith in God, and are then most fresh, and real, and inexhaustible, when they spring from a source of trusting love, in a heart that rests upon the Rock of Ages, and which, while it has its hold upon the earth, is yet aspiring upwards.

A. JESSOPP, *Norwich School Sermons*, p. 236.

REFERENCE : v. 8.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxix., p. 148.

Chap. v., vers. 9, 10.

God's Appointment concerning Man.

I. Note, first, the persons in whose favour God's appointment is made. They are believers in Jesus. Salvation is limited to faith in Christianity; and therefore the appointment of God that is unto salvation, must be subject to the same limitation.

II. The appointment. There is a twofold aspect—a negative and a positive view. He has not appointed us to wrath, but He has appointed us to obtain salvation through Jesus Christ. (1) Has He appointed any to wrath? The contrast is not between us and others. The object of the passage is to give unspeakable comfort and assurance to the child of God, that he is not appointed to wrath, but to salvation. Those who live in sin, those who refuse to accept God's mercy, will, no doubt, suffer eternal punishment. That is a scriptural truth. But to say that God appointed men and women, who are now living in unbelief and sin, before they appeared upon this earth, to eternal punishment, by virtue of His arbitrary will and purpose, is as different as one thing can be from another, and is altogether inconsistent with our ideas of the righteousness, integrity, and holiness of God. (2) There is one exception. Was not Jesus appointed to wrath? On Him was laid the iniquity of us all. He became responsible for it. He volunteered to take our sins upon Himself. He suffered to teach us that sin and the curse are inseparable, that where sin is there is, and must be, a curse. Our substitute is Christ; He was sacrificed, and died on the cross for us; He bore the brunt of God's wrath, and it is only through Him that we can see the Father.

C. Molyneux, *Penny Pulpit*, new series, No. 134.

Chap. v., vers. 9-15.

I. This passage, verses 9-15, has its interest and value as showing us that the earliest and the latest of the Pauline Epistles are all at one in regard to the central doctrines of salvation through Christ. In this passage, we have, wrapped up in few words, indeed, but none the less really contained in them, his one uniform declaration of salvation through Christ, and His atoning death.

II. "Wherefore,"—seeing that such a future, such an inheritance of bliss is in store—"comfort yourselves together" by lovingly meditating upon it, by reminding one another of it, by helping one another in preparing for it, and so "edify one another." The clause is added "even as also ye do." Lest

the exhortation might appear to his friends to have some slight tinge of reproof in it, the Apostle closes it with words of praise, and this praise, this grateful, hearty recognition of their Christian conduct, is a further appeal to them yet more to abound in this good work.

III. And now, in accordance with his usual practice, the Apostle draws his epistle to a close with a series of general, but not miscellaneous directions—exhortations as to details of conduct, suggested probably by the knowledge he had of certain defects in the Thessalonian community—"ever follow that which is good." The aim set before the Christian is that which is good; good in the full compass of the word—the spiritual and also the temporal good of others—everything that in reality can be beneficial to them. Our following must be not only eager, it must be regular, persistent, ceaseless. The discharge of this duty is the Christian's highest privilege.

J. HUTCHISON, *Lectures on Thessalonians*, p. 201.

REFERENCES: v. 10.—J. Angus, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxiv., p. 289; *Homilist*, vol. iv., p. 117. v. 12.—T. L. Cuyler, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 49. v. 13.—E. M. Goulburn, *Thoughts on Personal Religion*, p. 142. v. 14.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ix., p. 222.

Chap. v., ver. 16.—"Rejoice evermore."

THE Duty of Gladness.

I. It is of the very nature of a duty that it is in our power to perform it; and so with this one, the very fact of its being laid upon us proves that we may, if we will, obey it. And therefore this at once disposes of those who would be inclined to say that gladness does not depend on ourselves, that it is the privilege of the few only to be gay, and of those few only under peculiar circumstances; and that it is as vain to tell people to be merry and joyful as to tell them to be tall or short, or strong or handsome. There is always a disposition to make every thing in our Christian life dependent on circumstances, and to make excuses for this or that sin or shortcoming, by blaming circumstances and not ourselves. Once begin with the perilous doctrine that men are what they are made, and that we cannot help our lapses because of the taint and defects in our nature, and we open the door to excuses for every kind of enormity.

II. Just as we get nearer to our true selves, the fresher and purer, and wiser and truer our souls become, the more food shall we find for joy; and because, as the pure soul finds life glad, and so gladness reacts upon the soul and tends to make it

pure, so this is the reason why the Apostle tells us to rejoice; for joy tends to cleanse the heart and banish thought of sin and misery, and wars against the useless recollection of sorrows that are gone, and of errors that cannot now be retrieved, and of troubles that may be temptations to murmur, but which by all the murmurs in the world can never be as though they were not. Sin slays gladness, and sin alone; and this is the awful part of the curse on sin, that it robs us of our inheritance of delight, and is a bar to our hearty joy. But to those who are trying to realise that they are Christ's redeemed ones, and who live in the habitual remembrance that God is their Father, joy need not be and ought not to be hard.

A. JESSOPP, *Norwich School Sermons*, p. 226.

REFERENCE: v. 16.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxxii., No. 1900.

Chap. v., vers. 16-18.

I. "REJOICE evermore." The Thessalonian converts were living in the sphere of sorrow. The Apostle exhorts them to be "girded with gladness." This rejoicing, being in the Lord, is opposed to the spurious joy which is the possession of sinners. The rejoicing before God is the deep, calm delight of the soul in communion with the Saviour. It springs out of the three Christian graces which this epistle so strongly emphasises —faith, hope, and love.

II. "Pray without ceasing." Prayerfulness is the atmosphere in which all things appear bright and joyous. The Apostle takes it for granted that none of his readers will call in question the duty of prayer. What he enjoins is *constancy* in prayer. The only conceivable way in which, on our part, this communion may be maintained, is the lifting up of the heart in conscious dependence and petition. The Church militant must ever be the Church suppliant. Prayer is the very beating of the pulse of the Christian's inner life. Without it life would cease to be.

III. "In everything give thanks." The clause seems to suggest not merely that the heart is at all times, and for all things to be grateful, but that the gratitude is to overflow into every action of the life—thanks giving and thanks living. Here is a sense in which we are evermore to pay back, as it were, in active service, what we receive from God. That debt ever due, never cancelled, we have ceaselessly to pay, and in paying it to find our highest joy.

J. HUTCHISON, *Lectures on Thessalonians*, p. 216.

REFERENCE: v. 16-18.—A. Murray, *With Christ in the School of Prayer*, p. 242.

Chap. v., ver. 17.—"Pray without ceasing."

I. THE nature of prayer. Prayer is not a rite, not a ceremony, not a cold, outward observance, but an actual intercourse between two parties—one who prays and One who hears. It is a communion between man and God, as real and actual as what passes between two men, when they speak face to face with each other. If the inward desire is absent, then prayer is absent; and though a man shall have breathed all his life long the words of prayer, he will never have prayed if he has never asked. We cannot ask unless we desire, and we cannot desire, unless we feel our want. Thus, therefore, the word expresses much more than this. See how great is the dignity of prayer. When the soul prays it is as if the distance between itself and the throne of God were annihilated. This is the idea conveyed in the expression of St. Paul. "Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace." To pray is to *come* to the throne of grace, its exercise bringing us into the very presence of God, as really and truly as if in the body we stepped upon the gleaming pavement of heaven, and stood at God's footstool, and gazed upon the majesty of His appearance. To the dignity of prayer, add likewise the thought of its power. There are mysteries in it as regards the free knowledge and the free sovereignty of God, which we cannot pierce nor try to pierce; but it is most certain from the word that believing prayer has, humanly speaking, in virtue of His own promise, the power to change and modify the Divine intentions.

II. Consider the universality of the duty. "Pray without ceasing." When the true nature of prayer is rightly comprehended, this, too, will follow from the mere instincts of the soul's desire. The words express (1) constancy and perseverance. The single petition does not make prayer. Supplication must be constant, as well as persevering. Not more truly is the body dependent for its life, and health, and food, upon a constant providence, than the soul is on the constant gift of grace. To think that the child of God will ever in this world be so free from enemies without and from fightings within as not to need fresh supplies of strength and peace, is but the device of the arch-enemy who lies in wait to lead us into ruin. Never, never can prayer cease on this side the grave; never, till the earthly strife is past, and the earthly temptation ended, and the earthly tempest has sunk to rest over the deep waters that roll between us and our Canaan above. Then, indeed, prayer will cease, but it will cease only to swell praise into a more

divine energy and lift its voice amid the rapturous hallelujahs of the redeemed.

E. GARBETT, *The Soul's Life*, p. 271.

RELIGIOUS exercises are, to many, very dull and uninteresting. Prayer is to many a tiresome thing. They will bow their heads or kneel and endure the uncongenial form, but they feel no interest in it, and they are secretly glad when it is over. To them religion appears to cloud the face, darken the sky, and make life gloomy. But if Christians are gloomy, it is not in obedience to Divine orders. "Rejoice evermore," says the inspiring Spirit, and, perhaps as a means towards the constant joy, he adds: "Pray without ceasing."

I. Does this mean that we are, night and day, to keep praying, never ceasing, as some of the ascetics of the Middle Ages claimed to do? No. Paul the Apostle laboured "night and day." Does that mean that he never slept at night? No, it is the expression, in common speech, of the idea that he was bent on his work all the time, just as you may sometimes say truly of a thing that you are thinking about it, or working at it, night and day. It means that you give to it all the time available. Now in the same sense are we to pray without ceasing.

II. Note, in the next place, that desire is a condition of real prayer. When our desire is according to the Divine will, and endorsed, so to speak, by the Saviour, it is granted. It goes in His name. So we have to study the Scriptures to know what is God's will, and look for the help of the Spirit to make us prayerful, hopeful, patient, persevering under that gracious influence. "This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us."

J. HALL, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xii., p. 15.

REFERENCES: v. 17.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xviii., No. 1039; S. A. Tipple, *Sunday Mornings at Norwood*, p. 109; *Plain Sermons*, vol. v., p. 131; J. Kelly, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xviii., p. 374; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. v., p. 270. v. 18.—H. Jones, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxvi., p. 341; E. L. Hull, *Sermons*, 1st series, p. 14. v. 19.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ix., p. 285; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. viii., p. 273; E. Garbett, *The Soul's Life*, p. 180; Bishop Temple, *Rugby Sermons*, vol. i., p. 46; C. G. Finney, *Gospel Themes*, p. 245.

Chap. v., ver 19-22.—"Quench not the Spirit; despise not prophesyings; prove all things; hold fast that which is good; abstain from every form of evil."

I. THE Holy Spirit is here spoken of not strictly in respect of His Person, but in respect of His energising power in and on

the heart. His workings, the Apostle would say, may be so counteracted as to become ineffectual. They may be quenched as the flame that is kindled for a time, but being neglected, sooner or later expires. Rain, dew, wind, fire, those mysterious agencies of nature, are in Scripture the fitting and effective emblems of the Holy Spirit's power in the hearts and lives of men. Those who are already believers are, in regard to their advancing sanctification, to cherish His manifestations. By relapse into sinful indulgences, the follower of Jesus quenches the spirit of grace within his heart.

II. "Despise not prophesyings." The Spirit is the Divine power, prophesyings are the human instrumentality. If men would be kept from quenching the one, they must be kept from thinking meanly of the other. The Spirit is the Divine light: if they would retain it, they must be careful to preserve prophesyings, the lamp in which it is placed.

III. The next clause links itself on to that which precedes it. So far from undervaluing or spurning prophecies, believers are urged to test them. As there are counterfeits of the truth in circulation, it is wise on the part of all who would buy the truth to test it, to submit it to careful examination, so that they may not be deceived, but may become possessors of that priceless treasure, gold tried in the fire, that finest gold which alone can make truly rich.

IV. The holding fast of the good exists only where there is an abhorring of that which is evil. Hence follows the closing exhortation: "Abstain from every form of evil." While the first reference is to evil elements, which might appear in the prophesyings, it purposely expands so as to embrace every kind of evil into contact with which the follower of Christ may be brought. In regard to all moral evil, he is enjoined to keep himself unspotted from the world.

J. HUTCHISON, *Lectures on Thessalonian.* p. 226.

REFERENCE: v. 20.—*Good Words*, vol. iii., p. 698.

Chap. v., ver. 21.—"Hold fast that which is good."

SOMETHING Worth Holding.

Our religion is—

I. Faith as opposed to infidelity.

II. Holiness as opposed to sin. By holiness I mean all possible human virtues and graces, purity of heart, truthfulness, temperance, uprightness, downrightness, love, generosity, magnanimity—all things good, true, and beautiful. To be holy is to

be equal to the angels. To be holy is to be in the image of God. Note two things here. (1) The religion of Christ demands holiness. In this demand for holiness I see the wonderful possibilities of the soul of man. (2) Our religion not only demands holiness, but it gives us a sure promise of attaining to it. It is said that the Church of Christ shall be without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

III. Our religion is love, practical goodness, self-denial, as opposed to selfishness. Selfishness is hateful everywhere. Self-denial—the incarnation of it in our Divine Master, this is our religion, and a man without any self-denial cannot be a Christian. It is faith; it is holiness; it is self-denial.

IV. Our religion is hope and joy as opposed to despair. In the past, ignorance; in the future, knowledge. In the past, sin; in the future, holiness. In the past, sorrow; in the future, joy. In the past, weakness and pain; in the future, eternal youth and health. In the past, the delirium of a fevered life; in the future, the saint's everlasting rest. In the past, the earth; in the future, heaven. This is our religion; is it not worth holding?

T. JONES, *Penny Pulpit*, new series, Nos. 804, 805.

REFERENCES: v. 21.—J. G. Rogers, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 360; S. Martin, *Westminster Sermons*, vol. xvii.; T. Jones, *Ibid.*, vol. vii., p. 321; F. Wagstaff, *Ibid.*, vol. xiii., p. 353; R. S. Candlish, *Scripture Characters*, p. 377; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 313; vol. v., p. 19; vol. xx., p. 209; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. iv., p. 337.

Chap. v., ver. 22.—"Abstain from all appearance of evil."

EVIL Superficially Attractive.

I. This is so important a precept (1) because men's faculties are so frail. We cannot penetrate below the surface; therefore let that which is superficial express that which is below, and be an outward sign of an inward reality. If you are seeking good, do not let appearances be against you, but let the good which is your object shine out and show. But its importance arises (2) from the influence which men have over each other. If we conceal our good, we are supposed, even by any who give us credit for it, to be ashamed of it. Our witness in its favour is curtailed and weakened if not destroyed; and (3) the corruption of our moral nature is such, and such our latent affinity for evil by reason of it that appearances, if allowed to be in favour of evil, are specially seductive to some, and generally dangerous to all.

II. The love of applause is a powerful motive in this aspect. Men love the praise of men more than the praise of God, and when the former becomes their idol, they gradually stifle their regrets, and purchase outward, perishable favour at the cost of inward peace. There can be few motives less worthy of a reasonable being exercising a choice of prudence than the mere passing breeze of approbation from the thoughtless. Yet how powerful a sway does this motive exercise to the larger number, leading them to tolerate in themselves, and therefore in society around them, or even to affect, the appearance of evil.

III. Lastly, the appearance of evil mostly draws on the reality. The love of applause forfeits real independence; even as the love of false independence forfeits obedience, forfeits holiness, and estranges us from Christ, its Model and its Author. We are members of Him, but barren boughs, whose end is to be burned, unless we walk in the spirit put within us.

H. HAYMAN, *Rugby Sermons*, p. 134.

Chap. v., ver. 23.—"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

ST. PAUL implies in the text that all three branches of our complicated nature are to undergo sanctification—that this leavening process is to go through the entire mass, until the whole is leavened. As the entire man is to be sanctified, so the entire man is to be educated, to be taken early, before the character has crystallised, and to be developed in all his faculties, corporeal, mental, and spiritual.

I. It is not on the mind, in the ordinary sense of the term, that the eternal destiny of man is suspended. The wayfaring man, though a fool, may be a jewel in his Redeemer's crown. On the other hand, "not many wise men after the flesh" were among the first converts to the Gospel. Does it not follow necessarily that to cultivate the mind, while you neglect the development of the spirit and the heart, is one of the most melancholy absurdities that a world which is full of absurdities can present? How can any sane person, being a believer in Revelation, profess to educate at all, without educating for heaven in the first instance, and holding that object foremost before his mind. The cultivation of the mind ranks next in importance. And its importance is immense. But even the cultivation of the mind is chiefly valuable, as it enables us to apprehend God more clearly, and so qualifies us for communion with Him through His dear Son.

II. The education of the soul or affections is also part of the province of education.

III. The body also demands its share in the education of the whole man. For the body, though it is a garment laid aside at death, yet it is to be resumed again on the morn of the Resurrection, and worn throughout eternity—the same as to its substance, only changed in form, and adapted to a glorified state of existence. There must be machinery, if effects are to be produced; for God works by means. But grace, the Holy Spirit, the Power from on High, except He put life and vigour into the means, they are all, even the highest of them, dead letters.

E. M. GOULBURN, *Sermons at Holywell*, p. 456.

Chap. v., ver. 23.—"I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

SPIRIT, Soul, and Body.

When this threefold division of our nature is mentioned, the term Body expresses those appetites which we have in common with the brutes; the term Soul denotes our moral and intellectual faculties, directed only towards objects of this world, and not exalted by the hope of immortality; and the term Spirit takes these same faculties when directed towards God and heavenly things, and from the purity, the greatness, and the perfect goodness of Him who is their object transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. Let us see, then, what is that blamelessness, or that degree of perfection, in which we should desire all these parts of our nature to be found when we stand before Christ's judgment seat.

I. First, the body. Bodily pleasures are the first which we ever enjoy, and our earliest lessons in virtue are learnt in struggling not to give way to them. What is wanted is not to lower or weaken the body, but to raise and strengthen the soul and spirit, that the body may be ready and able to do their work, which it cannot do unless it be itself sound and vigorous.

II. The soul is that part which is most commonly strengthened by the growth and cultivation of the powers of the understanding, and by the various objects which attract the mind as we come forth into actual life. And the general tendency of civilised society is to call forth our minds into action rather than our bodies; so that as we advance in life the soul naturally takes the lead. This is the life, assuredly, of a reasonable creature; of one, looking only to this visible world, noble and admirable. And here, without the Gospel, our progress must stop.

III. But the Gospel which has brought life and immortality to light, has also pointed out to us that part of our nature by which we can be fitted for it—that is, our spirit, our spiritual hopes, and our feelings of love and charity. The true object of man's life is to perfect our spirits, our desires after perfect happiness, our love to God and to men as the children of God; to perfect in us that part of our being, which alone is remote from selfishness.

T. ARNOLD, *Sermons*, vol. i., p. 227.

REFERENCES: v. 23.—Bishop Barry, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xx., p. 88; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. vi., p. 94; G. Bonney, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 169; F. W. Robertson, *Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 43; E. L. Hull, *Sermons*, 1st series, p. 225.

Chap. v., vers. 23-28.

I. THERE is much of instruction and comfort in this Apostolic prayer. The blessing prayed for is that the Thessalonian converts may be sanctified wholly, that their spirit and soul and body may be preserved. The Apostle adopts the trichotomy which in some form or other may be said to belong to almost all systems of philosophy—"body, soul, spirit." It is the combination of these three which makes up our nature; it is the due relations between these three which constitute our sole possible happiness; it is the right training of these three that is the object of that life-long education which should begin in our earliest years, and end only with the grave. In the case of Christ's people, the Apostle's prayer is that body, soul, and spirit be preserved entire, without blame, being sanctified wholly—each in its complete measure and perfect proportions. Delivered from the dominion of sin and Satan, they are in God's keeping unto holiness. The whole man is to become wholly man and God.

II. St. Paul next turns aside, very characteristically, to ask the pleadings of his Thessalonian friends with the God of peace on behalf of himself and his fellow-labourers. He who was giving thanks always for them all, making mention of them in *his* prayers, in the yearning love of his heart now asks them to make mention of himself in *their* prayers. Such is Christian fellowship. The Apostolic teacher turns from instruction and exhortation and warning to supplication for help—not man's help, indeed, but God's—yet God's help brought near to him through the intercessory prayer of God's own people.

III. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." In all the variations with which it appears in the Pauline epistles,

this benediction never has the word "grace" a-wanting. Thus, his first epistle begins and closes with that word, which, above all others, reveals the summed sweetness of the whole Gospel. Those who have the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ with them on earth, cannot fail to have glory with Him hereafter in heaven.

J. HUTCHISON, *Lectures on Thessalonians*, p. 238.

Chap. v., ver. 24.—"Faithful is He that calleth you."

I. THE faith of man and the faithfulness of God. The highest object of man's existence is undoubtedly to hold communion with his God. For this his nature was originally framed, and in this alone will his nature ever find contentment or repose. The remedy for his present condition must be a restoration of the communion of man with God. And this is the most general character of the Christian religion—the simplest definition of its nature and object. Man is separated from God as a criminal: the communion is restored, by free pardon on God's part, of the acceptance of that pardon upon man's. And thus it is that Christianity restores the race of man, by restoring the communion with God.

II. The instance of God's inflexible fidelity, which the Apostle notes in the text, is gloriously characteristic of the spiritual system to which we belong. The kingdom of God was to Paul an inward and spiritual kingdom, even at the time that he looked forward to the presence of the Lord, and the glory of His power, when He shall come to be "glorified in His saints." It was not relief from temporal ends that the Apostle promised, no security from adversity, that was to manifest the omnipotence of God exerted on behalf of His people. No: the mercy of God might send them to the stake or the lions; it was still His mercy, if it "but kept them unspotted from the world." The faithfulness of God is represented by the Apostle as extending to the whole man, to body, soul, and spirit, which are all said to be preserved blameless. The entire of our feeble humanity is sheltered under this canopy of Divine protection.

III. It is also said of this faithfulness, that it is the faithfulness of Him that calleth you. This is not the least wondrous circumstance in the unalterable faithfulness of God, that it is a fidelity to His own gracious engagement. He calls, and He is faithful to His own merciful calling; He summons the heart to Himself, and He adheres to His own voluntary summons; He, without destroying human freedom or human responsibility, of His free

grace, commences, continues, and ends, the whole Christian work. Yea, so faithful is this His profound compassion, that He represents Himself as bound to the impulses of His own unconstrained mercy. There is no bond but His own love, yet that bond is stronger than iron; and He, whom the universe cannot compel, commands Himself.

W. ARCHER BUTLER, *Sermons Doctrinal and Practical*, 1st series, p. 207.

REFERENCES: v. 24.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 316; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xvii., p. 49. v. 25.—J. Aldis, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xv., p. 289; Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 189.

Chap. v., ver. 27.—"I charge you, by the Lord, that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren."

THE Witness to Christ of the Oldest Christian Writing.

If the books of the New Testament were arranged according to the dates of their composition, this epistle would stand first. It was written somewhere about twenty years after the Crucifixion, and long before any of the existing Gospels. It is, therefore, of peculiar interest, as being the most venerable extant Christian document, and as being a witness to Christian truth quite independent of the Gospel narratives.

I. Let us hear its witness to the Divine Christ. There is nothing in any part of Scripture more emphatic and more lofty in its unfaltering proclamation of the truth of Christ's Divinity than this altogether undoctrinal epistle. It takes it for granted that so deeply was that truth embedded in the consciousness of the converts that an allusion to it was all that was needed for their understanding and faith.

II. Let us ask what this witness has to say about the dying Christ. (1) As to the fact. The Jews killed the Lord Jesus. The historical fact, is here set forth distinctly. And then, beyond the fact, there is as distinctly, though in the same incidental fashion, set forth the meaning of the fact. "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us."

III. Notice what the witness has to say about the risen and ascended Christ. The risen Christ is in the heavens. And Paul assumes that these people, just brought out of heathenism, have received that truth into their hearts, in the love of it, and know it so thoroughly that we can take for granted their entire acquiescence in and acceptance of it. Remember, we have nothing to do with the four gospels here; remember, not a line of them

had yet been written—we are dealing here with an entirely independent witness—and then tell us what importance is to be attached to this evidence of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Twenty years after His death, here is this man speaking about that Resurrection as being not only something that he had to proclaim, and believed, but as being the recognised and notorious fact which all the Churches accepted, and which underlay all their faith.

IV. Let us hear what this witness has to say about the returning Christ. These are the points of his testimony: (1) a personal coming, (2) a re-union of all believers in Him, in order to eternal felicity and mutual gladness, (3) the destruction that shall fall by His coming on those that turn away from Him. I remember once walking in the long galleries of the Vatican, on the one side of which there are Christian inscriptions from the catacombs, and on the other heathen inscriptions from the tombs. One side is all dreary and hopeless, one long sigh echoing along the line of white marbles, "Vale, vale, in æternum vale!" on the other side, "In Christo, in Pace, in Spe." That is the witness that we have to lay to our hearts. And so death becomes a passage, and we let go the dear hands, believing that we shall clasp them again.

A. MACLAREN, *The God of the Amen*, p. 41.

II. THESSALONIANS.

Chap. i., vers. 1-7.

I. This Epistle opens with the mention of the same Apostolic group as does the first. Paul was not alone : Silvanus and Timotheus were still with him in closest fellowship of toil and suffering. The Church, too, is described in the same way. Still further, the Apostle gives expression, as before, so again, to his devout thankfulness to God for the graces of the new life which his converts exhibit. So far from there being any decline in these graces, there was conspicuous progress. In the Christian life it ought always to be so. True steadfastness is a standing fast, but it can never be a standing still. Continuance in all the elements of prosperity of soul, as regards both the individual and the community, is insured only by advancement in them. While the Apostle contemplates the increase of these Divine graces in his friends, he also recognises it as a special token of Divine goodness to himself. The exhibition of these graces on the dark background of suffering was not merely an example—it was not only a spectacle which the heathen had never seen before (for *their* acts of heroic endurance had no root in patience and faith); it was distinctly a setting forth, an exhibition to all who had the eyes of their understanding enlightened, of the rectitude of God's dealings.

II. "Rest with us." By the word "rest" Paul directs the thoughts of his reader forward and upward, "All but opening heaven already by his word." There is, indeed, a power in the word to comfort and sustain those in whose hearts burns "the hot fever of unrest." It is a word of promise to all faithful but weary workers in every noble cause. Erasmus once wrote "No one will believe how anxiously, for a long time, I have wished to retire from these labours into a scene of tranquillity, and for the rest of my life (dwindled, it is true, to the shortest space) to converse only with Him who once cried and who still cries, 'Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' In this turbulent, and I may say, raging

world, amid so many cares, which the state of the times heaps upon me in public, or which declining years or infirmities cause me in private, nothing do I find on which my mind can more comfortably repose than on this sweet communion with God." The pathetic longing of these words for a repose that comes not at man's call is yet to attain to satisfaction. When earth and time be passed away, "there remaineth a rest to the people of God."

J. HUTCHISON, *Lectures on Thessalonians*, p. 252.

REFERENCES: i. 3.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. iv., No. 205; vol. xxxi., No. 1857.

Chap. i., vers. 7-12.

THE rest awaiting Christ's troubled saints is in the fullest sense to be their possession at the revelation of the Lord Jesus. He who is emphatically the coming One is to be revealed. There is a vividness in the word. He is now hidden. But when He comes again, every eye shall see Him.

I. The term "everlasting" qualifying "destruction," as it here does, shows that this destruction is not extinction of being. It is not loss of being, but loss of well-being: for as its opposite, life, is more than mere existence, so destruction is more than mere non-existence. The purpose the Apostle has in view in the description of the coming is the same here as in 1 Thess. iv. 15-17, the giving of comfort and encouragement to his readers in the midst of apprehensions and trials.

II. "And fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness." There are structural objections to the rendering which makes "the good pleasure" to be God's. It is rather His people's moral goodness, and their good pleasure in it—every aspiration after goodness which they cherish within their breasts. Hence the Revised Version is to be preferred—"every desire of goodness." All genuine holiness, being a cheerful obedience to God's law, is, indeed, the good pleasure of His will; but it is also on the part of His people their "good pleasure and goodness," and it is this which is signified here. The Apostle's prayer is that his friends may have, by God's grace, every desire after holiness brought to perfect realisation, so that they may become full of goodness, finding at last their perfect happiness in perfect sanctification.

J. HUTCHISON, *Lectures on Thessalonians*, p. 267.

REFERENCES: i. 7-20.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iii., p. 361. i. 9.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. vi., pp. 327, 339.

Chap. i., ver. 10.—"When He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe."

I. ALL creation is one great illustration of Jesus. God has laid up everything, if we only see it aright, for the exhibition of His dear Son; so that, faithful to that great idea, when He comes He will come, indeed, to judge the world, but He will come yet more "to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe." And the Church—this poor, divided, feeble, unworthy, sin-stained Church—does it set forth the character of its Lord? does it make Him admirable? It is pleasant to be assured that if it does not now, it shall then. Be you only one of those who receive gladly the processes of the sanctifying Spirit into your heart—be you only, at this moment, a simple believer—"when He comes," He must be magnified in you. For He comes for no other purpose. "When He shall come to be glorified in His saints and admired in all them that believe."

II. There is a distinction between "glorified in the saints," and "admired in them that believe." We must trace the difference. "Saints" are either those in whom the great work of sanctification is going on in this world, or those in whom it is perfected in the world to come. In this passage it is the perfectly holy. Now, holiness, as regards man, is the final end. All else—election, redemption, grace—is only a means to the one end—that we may be holy. Therefore we are always taught to think of everything else as a first principle, and to go on to holiness. And the reason is this:—Holiness is the image of God; to see His own image is the will and purpose of God. That there might be an image of God was the first creation, that there might be an image of God is the second creation. The thick clay will have become the beautiful vessel—the rude ore will be the pure, fine gold. Out of the unlikeliest materials the hands of the Almighty will have made His masterpiece—the pearl from the shell, the diamond from the charcoal—and the whole world will marvel at that transformation; and God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, will be "glorified in His saints."

III. And "admired"—the word is taken in its original and truest meaning—"wondered at," wondered at in all them that believe—*i.e.*, in all them that did believe when they were in the school of this present, probationary world. The whole world will be looking on, and they will see, with astonishment, the triumphs of faith; as all men see again the faithfulness of Jesus

to His own Word, and the efficacy of His atoning blood, He will be "wondered at in all them that believe."

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 4th series, p. 303.

REFERENCES: i. 10.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxv., No. 1477; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ix., p. 279.

Chap. i., vers. 11, 12.

WORTHY of your Calling.

In the former letter to the Church of Thessalonica, the Apostle had dwelt, in ever-memorable words—which sound like a prelude of the trump of God—on the coming of Christ at the end to judge the world and to gather His servants into His rest. That great thought seems to have excited some of the hotter heads in Thessalonica, and to have led to a general feverishness and unwholesome expectancy of the near approach or actual dawn of that day. This letter is intended as a supplement to the former epistle, and to damp down the fire which has been kindled. It, therefore, dwells with emphasis on the necessary preliminaries to the dawning of that day of the Lord, and throughout seeks to lead the excited spirits to patience and persistent work, and to calm their feverish expectations. This purpose colours the whole letter.

I. Notice first, here, the Divine test for Christian lives: "We pray for you, that God would count you worthy of your calling." Now, it is to be observed that this counting worthy refers mainly to a future estimate to be made by God of the completed career and permanent character brought out of earth into another state by Christian souls. So, then, we are brought face to face with this thought of an actual, stringent judgment which God will apply in the future to the lives and characters of professing Christians. Now, that is a great deal too much forgotten in our popular Christian teaching, and in our average Christian faith. Let no Christian man fancy that he shall escape the righteous judgment of God. An absolute correspondence, a complete worthiness or perfect desert, is impossible for us all, but a worthiness which His merciful judgment who makes allowance for us all may accept, as not too flagrantly contradictory of what He meant us to be, is possible even for our poor attainments and our stained lives. If it were Paul's supreme aim, should it not be ours, that we may be worthy of Him that hath called us, and walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called?

II. Note, here, the Divine help to meet the test. Paul says,

in effect, first, that God will fulfil every desire that longs for goodness. He is scarcely deserving of being called good, who does not desire to be better. Aspiration must always be ahead of performance in a growing life, such as every Christian life ought to be. To long for any righteousness and beauty of goodness, is, in some imperfect and incipient measure, to possess the good for which we long.

III. Note the Divine glory of the Worthy. This fulfilment of every desire of goodness and work of faith is in order that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you and ye in Him. Christ's reputation is in our hands. Men judge of Him by us. The name of the Lord Jesus is glorified in you if you live worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called; and people will think better of the Master if His disciples are faithful. On the other hand, there is glory accruing to perfected saints in Christ. "And ye in Him." And the union will lead to a participation in His glory which shall exalt their limited, stained, and fragmentary humanity into the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

A. MACLAREN, *Paul's Prayers*, p. 1.

REFERENCE: i. 13, 14.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. i., Nos. 41, 42.

Chap. ii., ver. 1.—"Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him."

THE Re-gathering of the Saints.

We have now before us the time and the season of which St. Paul speaks in the text, and we have to observe that he uses it not as a terror but as an attraction—"we beseech you"—as those that would not part with it for their lives. The advent, a re-gathering, is in St. Paul's view a prospect full of consolation. What is it that makes the world the wilderness it is? In a large part it is that of which the re-gathering is a direct reversal—dispersion. There are senses, no doubt, in which dispersion is tolerable; the separation and severance of nations, not more by dividing seas and deserts than by dividing tongues. It would be foolish to say that this is to any one man a loss or an affliction. It is as a type that we must read it if we would enter into its significance. Sin is the great dividing force. Sin divides even its joys. Where sin is there is selfishness. Hand may trust hand, lips may speak of love and vow affection, yet in the very sinning there is a breach, and in the recoil and rebound there is severance. Sin is selfishness hidden in the

act; selfishness perceived in the consequences. Sin is dispersion alike in its loves and its remorses. Well may it close the dark category in the dark page of sorrow for one of light and gospel consolation.

II. On the loving heart of St. Paul—a heart large without limit, yet stretched almost to bursting by the multitude of its sympathies, there lay the sorrow of the dispersion. He felt it in every sense; felt it in its very distance. Yet more bitterly did Paul feel this dispersion to be an intolerable burden of suspense and anguish, while he knew not for certain how a letter had been taken or an injunction obeyed, or whether a door had been opened for successful ministry. It is the division of bodies or the division of souls which distracts him. Even death—and you might think that St. Paul would have been above it with his strong faith and bright hope—even death troubled him. He felt as a dispersion that death which he dreaded not as a destruction.

III. Therefore, with St. Paul, as to all whose hearts are like his, big and warm in their affections and sympathies, there was a peculiar charm in the thought of the advent as a re-gathering. "I beseech you," he says, as though no other entreaty could equal it in strength, "by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him." Here we meet and part; we commune and separate with a sense of unrest and dissatisfaction which leaves us in the end desolate. To the friend of our soul we say not one half of that which we meant to say; we said not the thing which we meant, or he misheard or misinterpreted the thing spoken. Our love he read not; our passing humour he took as a change of affection; our soul speaking to his soul with the soul's voice was not recognised as the soul's, and we almost begin to say, "I will keep my love till it can speak the one tongue of the immortals." When Christ comes friend shall meet friend in absolute oneness—no earth-born, sinborn cloud to come between; knowing at last as known, because loved as loving.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Penny Pulpit*, new series, No. 514.

Chap. ii., vers. 1-4.

I. THE first part of this second Epistle aims at widening the view of the Thessalonian converts into the future—the future bliss of believers, the future doom of the rebellious. The second part, embraced in this chapter, seeks to guard them beforehand against delusion as to the nearness of that future, and the mis-

chief which the cherishing of such delusion would produce. The Apostle wishes them to be forearmed by being forewarned. His chief design is to impress upon their minds the one truth, that the proper attitude to be assumed towards the day of the Lord is that not of idle curiosity, but of steadfast and untroubled faith. The spirit of restless eschatological excitement meets, sooner or later, only with disappointment. It brings with it no increase of joyful hopefulness; it rather ministers ultimately to the service of the world. Whatever be the value of Apocalyptic study, it must ever, as these Epistles themselves so strikingly illustrate, find its balancing and regulating principle in the study of Christian ethics, and in the homage of Christian work.

II. The day of the Lord will not be "except the falling away come first." Chrysostom curiously says, "He calls Antichrist himself the apostasy, as being about to destroy many, and make them fall away." But obviously this apostasy is rather that which is simply to precede and usher in the revelation of the great Apostate himself, "the man of sin." He is described not as an ideal, but as an historical personage—the man who is regarded as the very embodiment of all evil—the hideous consummation and manifestation of all that sin can make man. Depravity is in him personified. The sanctuary or inmost shrine, in which he is to take his seat, is not to be explained with rigid literalness as referring to the temple of Jerusalem. We must regard it as representing the Church of Christ—not any material structure, such as St. Peter's at Rome, but the universal company of professed believers. "He sets himself forth as God." It is the act of one who, while he is, as never man was before, the representative of evil, represents himself in his own person and deeds, as the individual manifestation of Divine power and grace.

J. HUTCHISON, *Lectures on Thessalonians*, p. 280.

REFERENCE: ii. 3-10.—*Homilist*, vol. vi., p. 392.

Chap. ii., vers. 5-12.

CAN we fix down the description of the man of sin to any one system or person? or ought we simply to say, with Augustine, that we must remain in total ignorance as to the Apostle's meaning? Between these two extremes we may occupy a middle position.

I. The theory must be set aside which declares these words have been long ago fulfilled. It would, in no sense, be either easy or useful to trace this view through its many varieties and

intricacies. It is enough to say that the passage presents to us no mere allegory, refusing to be minutely scanned. The description is far too minute and specific to be thus explained away.

II. Nor is the question to be solved by supposing the words to be descriptive of a growing tendency, which the Apostle may have noticed in the Church, to fall back into the beggarly elements of Judaism, or to be seduced by any grotesque manifestations of the Judaistic spirit which might take place before the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple.

III. The points in which the identification of this passage with the Church of Rome is held to be complete are well known. They are undeniably striking. The prominent errors of the Church of Rome, the gradual growth of these from principles and practices which can be traced in their germ to the very earliest Christian times—the gathering together of the power and authority of the Church into one head, the despotic pride and pomp which clung to that Church as prominent characteristics, the imposture which in lying wonders, is so conspicuous in that Church, all these have often been marshalled in order, so as to appear a long line of evidence which cannot be broken. None the less it is to be observed, and more candidly acknowledged than it often is, that there are aspects of the case which the explanation by no means fits. It would be the spirit of antichrist itself at work if we were to deny the many elements of true Christianity in the Church of Rome. Besides, even the corrupt elements in Romanism do not in all respects correspond with the clauses of this passage. We seem rather to be directed to look for the coming of one who shall combine in himself—in what way we cannot know—the two elements of unbelief and superstition, and will work towards the overthrow of all that is good and true. Thus drawing men after him to destruction, he is himself to be destroyed.

J. HUTCHISON, *Lectures on Thessalonians*, p. 292.

REFERENCES: ii. 7.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 236; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 86.

Chap. ii., ver. 13; iii., ver. 5.

I. THE salvation to which the Thessalonians are described as chosen of God is regarded chiefly in the aspect of a present possession, and it is "in (not through) sanctification of the Spirit." The words surely mean spiritual sanctification; an inward process, not merely outward change of conduct. The

salvation without doubt is that which is possessed in advancing holiness, the sanctification wrought in the spirit of man by the Divine Spirit. A renewal of the spirit of the believer which of necessity manifests itself in the renewal of his life.

II. "Stand fast." The duty of perseverance is enforced upon the Thessalonians, both as a Church and as individuals—steadfast adherence to all truly Christian doctrine and practice—and that is possible only where there is loving loyalty to Jesus Christ Himself.

III. After precept comes prayer, and the prayer is that their hearts may be comforted and stablished in every good word and work. Thus, through meditation and action alike, the one ministering to the other, would they attain to tried Christian character—the crown of Christian life. It is instructive to notice that, as in 1 Thess. iii. 11, the Saviour is associated in prayer with God the Father as directing the outward movements, the external details of Paul's work, so in this passage He is similarly associated with God the Father in ministering to the soul-prosperity of believers. God the Son is thus represented as one with God the Father in being the Source of all guiding and protecting care, and the Source of all spiritual blessing.

IV. While Paul directs his readers' thoughts to the faithfulness of their Saviour, he will also encourage them by the assurance that he himself has confidence in them—a confidence which he holds fast, because he rests on the faithfulness of their common Lord. He believes that they are even now doing, and that they will continue to do, all that he enjoins, whatever be the tendency to faintness (for Christian work is toil); he is persuaded that the grace of perseverance will be theirs. So long as men have their hearts ever turning to the love of God, they will be "strengthened with all might unto all patience," so that they, doing whatsoever is commanded, may endure unto the end.

J. HUTCHISON, *Lectures on Thessalonians*, p. 308.

REFERENCES: ii. 13.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. v., p. 178; Magee, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xxi., p. 272. ii. 15.—H. Hitchens, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxvi., p. 284; F. Pigou, *Ibid.*, vol. xxvii., p. 289. ii. 16.—J. Baldwin Brown, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 387; R. Tuck, *Ibid.*, vol. xix., p. 291.

Chap. ii., vers. 16, 17.—"Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us. . . . Comfort your hearts," etc.

LIFE'S Trouble and its True Remedy.

I. By Divine will there is a trouble common to man—a trouble

of life in which all and each may expect some share, and which, at particular times of life, grows very intense. If any one seems to be excepted, such an one might almost fear Divine desertion thereby, or some Divine displeasure resting on him; for how few of God's own children get through the world and into the heavenly home with little or no trouble by the way. There is a sense in which Christians drink more deeply of trouble than ordinary men, for in proportion as they are really Christian they have more refined and developed sensibilities. They live with Christ; therefore they feel with Christ, and receive life's trouble full on the Christian moral sense; and if that does not make the trouble more in itself, it makes it more to them.

II. There are many kinds of so-called consolation in which men seek relief from the trouble and sorrow of their life. (1) First, there is what may be called the desperate consolation of the ostrich when it sticks its head into the sand, and does not see the pursuing foe. I mean the way of complete thoughtlessness, of designed, persistent thoughtlessness—indifference to the deepest things of human life and experience. It is a poor policy; it is unworthy of a man, and it does not succeed. (2) Then there is another kind of so-called consolation which is quite insufficient for the strong trouble of life, and which may be called the presumptuous consolation. "Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God," and then, indeed, you may expect to be "exalted in due season." (3) There is the superficial consolation for the trouble and sorrow of life—that, I mean, which soothes the mind, and quiets certain feelings, without going down to the roots and foundations of things. No consolation can be suitable to man, or can be a real strength and confirmation if it does not sink down to the foundation of things. In one word, we want nothing else than "everlasting consolation and good hope through grace." Work your way by any of these lines, or by all of them. See what men can do by their thinking and their endeavours, and you will find, when you come at length to this consolation, that it stands sublimely alone.

III. You cannot think through the problem by the unaided human faculty, and you cannot drive yourself through it by the unaided human faculty, and you cannot forget it. No, there is but one way, and that is to come to God; all consolation is in Him. He is everlasting, and from everlasting He hath loved us. Believe the Gospel; accept its truth; hold its truth; do its duty; breathe its spirit; conform to its ideal—in no trans-

cendental spirit, but humbly and earnestly, in common things and in daily life—and you have the everlasting consolation of God. Our God consoles us not only by surprising us with mercies, and lighting all our great future by hope, but by binding us to daily duty, and helping us day by day, amid trouble and care and toil, from the fountains of His everlasting care and purity, so that we are in some humble measure stablished in every good word and work.

A. RALEIGH, *Penny Pulpit*, new series, No. 822.

THE Eternal Comforter.

I. Our sorrow is greatly enhanced by the mystery of life. If we could only understand the reason of it, it would be easier to bear. But the tears seem to be so unnecessary, the wounding so needless, the pain and anguish so inexplicable. Life is a tangled skein, and we can get no clue. Now in this mystery and perplexity of life there comes One who says, "Trust Me." He does not, indeed, throw scientific light on the mystery of life. He does not solve its enigma. He does not put the clue into our hands. But He says "Trust Me." It is not a poet who speaks to us, who has gotten a little deeper insight than we have gotten. It is a witness-bearer, who out of the eternal life is come and into the eternal life is going. His is the witness; and in this is the root and ground of all that Christianity has offered us—faith, not in a poet, not in a philosopher, not in a theologian, but faith in a witness-bearer.

II. But this mystery of life does not so greatly enhance the pain of life as the fragmentariness of it. It is not without semblance of reason, at least, that the broken column is put up in our graveyards. Life seems to be such a series of separated fragments; it seems to be so broken, so inharmonious, so discordant. And now Christ brings us this further message. Life is not fragmentary. There is no break. Life is like a song, and the singer goes from us, and the song grows dimmer and more indistinct and fades away; but the singer has not stopped his singing, though our eye cannot follow him into the unknown whither he is gone.

III. The injustice of life is hardest of all to bear. He who has shed on the mystery of life the light of trust, and He who has shed on the fragmentariness of life the light of hope, sheds on our awful unfaith in God, our awful sense of injustice and wrong against which we protest in vain endeavour, the light of love: for this is Christ's declaration everywhere and always;

that the devil is not the god of this world, nor humanity the god of this world, nor furies, nor a god of fury, but infinite and eternal love is working out the web of human destiny.

L. ABBOTT, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxvi., p. 161.

REFERENCES: ii. 16, 17.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxvi., No. 1542; vol. xix., No. 1096. iii. 1.—E. Cooper, *Practical Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 312.

Chap. iii., ver. 2.—"All men have not faith."

I. IT was, no doubt, with surprise and regret that Paul wrote these words, as it is with surprise and regret that any Christian recognises how vast a multitude of men have not faith. In considering the causes which prevent men from coming to Christ and believing in Him he must divide them into two great classes, those who have never felt any desire to enter into fellowship with Christ, and those who have had some desire, but have stumbled at some difficulty. First of all, there are those who have never felt any desire whatever for the salvation that is in Christ, and that is because they have never felt the degradation and defilement of sin, and their helplessness under the defilement and degradation; or they have never felt the attractiveness of holiness. They may, unconsciously, admire goodness, they may admire truth, and courage, and honour, and love, but they never connected the idea of holiness with these virtues. There is no other way, no other way even proposed, whereby a man may reach maturity and manhood than by becoming a Christian. Without Christ a man may reach a very great deal, but he cannot reach all. The man who is not a Christian, who has no connection with those things which we reach in Christ, is a man only in an imperfect sense of the word, it is only by courtesy that he can be called a man. He is by no means like the person that he is yet to become in Christ. But then, until he himself is smitten with the love of holiness, until the beauty of holiness and union with God stands before him as it is shown us in Christ and wins his heart, or until, on the other hand, providential circumstances and the Spirit of God open up to him the deep degradation and defilement of sin, he is not likely to own that Christ is anything that he needs.

II. Closely allied to this great preliminary obstacle is the misconception which looks upon religion as concerned solely about the life to come, and as not likely to bring in considerable light or strength into our present concerns. Many persons deliberately put aside religion, believing that it would interfere

with legitimate pursuits, waste their energies, and introduce gloom and constraint into their life. The professed secularist and the practical secularist each says to himself, "I have occupations and duties now that require all my strength, and if there is another world the best preparation for it that I can make is to do thoroughly, and with all my strength, the duties now pressing upon me." Most of us have felt the attraction of this position. It has a sound of candid, manly common-sense. It appeals to the Anglo-Saxon within us, and to our esteem for what is practical, and has its foot upon the solid earth. Moreover, it is directly true that the very best preparation, the only preparation, for any future world is to do thoroughly well the duties of the present. Of course that is so. But the whole question remains: What are the duties of the present? Can we determine what these duties are until we determine whether the proclamation made by Christ is true or false? If there is a God, it is not in the future only that we have to do with Him, but now. All our duties must be tinged with the idea of this sovereign purpose and of God's relation to us. To defer all consideration of God is simply impossible. God is as much in this world as in any world; and if so, our whole life in every part of it must be a godly not a secular life—a life we live well and can only live well in true fellowship with God. A mind that can divide life into duties of the present and duties of the future, really does not understand what life is, and entirely misapprehends what Christianity is.

III. Turning to the other great class of men, we find that many are really willing; their thoughts are always turning towards Christ and His religion; and yet they are continually held back by some misconception of the way in which a fellowship with Him is formed, or some other misconception. One of these misconceptions is the not unnatural, nor altogether unworthy idea that some preparation for coming to Christ is necessary—a deeper conviction, a firmer assurance of continuing in His service, or, perhaps, more feeling is thought to be required. This is a very common state of mind; because it is difficult for any man among us to grasp once for all the idea that Christ has been sent into this world to save us from every kind of evil, and especially from every kind of spiritual faultiness. Uniformly Christ offers Himself to men as they are; He offers the one effectual remedy for our whole condition, whatever it is. And until we accept the remedy that is in Him, we cannot expect to have any more trustworthy repentance or sincere and

powerful purpose of amendment. Waiting does no good. To abstain from seeking His help while we strive to make ourselves more worthy of His society, is simply to propose to do the very hardest part of our salvation ourselves. If you are not penitent, Christ is exalted a Prince and a Saviour to bestow repentance. If you are not penitent, you are not very likely to become so anywhere else than at the foot of the cross. It is there that men learn what sin is. If you have no real pain on account of your severance from God, no sorrow that you have preferred your own will to His, no keen thirst for reconcilement to Him, surely this is only what may be expected until we see God and know His love in Christ. This spiritual deadness, which can neither see nor feel as it ought, this is by far the most serious element in our sinful condition; and if without Christ you could save yourself from this, then there is positively nothing else for which you need His aid—nothing at all. The insensibility you are conscious of, your surprising indifference to the spiritual aspect of things, your unconcern about pleasing God, or even about being at peace with God—all this is precisely what identifies you as the person who needed just the revelation of sin and of holiness that Christ made, and just that help of being delivered from sin that Christ offered you. If, then, any one has been delaying to accept Christ, on the understanding that before doing so he must pass through some preliminary and preparatory process, he should recognise that this is a mistake. No preparation is required. What Christ offers He offers freely; He offers to all, He offers on the spot. The preparation for salvation is sin, as danger is the preparation for rescue.

M. DODS, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xlii., p. 64.

REFERENCES: iii. 2.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. viii., p. 98; *Homilist*, vol. v., p. 217.

Chap. iii., ver. 5.—**"The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ."**

THE Heart's Home and Guide.

I. The home of the heart. "The Lord direct you into the love of God and the patience of Christ." The Apostle gathers up the whole sum of his desires for his friends, and presents to us the whole aim of our efforts for ourselves, in these two things: a steadfast love to God, and a calm endurance of evil, and persistence in duty, unaffected by suffering or by pain. If we have these two, we shall not be far from being what God wishes to see us. Now the Apostle's thought here of "leading us into"

these two, seems to suggest the metaphor of a great home with two chambers in it, of which the inner was entered from the outer. The first room is "the love of God," and the second is "the patience of Christ." It comes to the same thing, whether we speak of the heart as dwelling in love, or of love as dwelling in the heart. The metaphor varies; the substance of the thought is the same; and that thought is, that the heart should be the sphere and subject of a steadfast, habitual, all-pleasing love, which issues in unbroken calmness of endurance, and persistence of service, in the face of evil. Passive and active patience is the direct fruit of love to God. The one chamber opens into the other. For they whose hearts dwell in the sweet sanctities of the love of God, will ever be those who say, with a calm smile, as they put out their hand to the bitterest draught, "The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?"

II. Notice the Guide of the heart to its home. "The Lord direct you." We have here a distinct address to Jesus Christ as Divine, and the Hearer of prayer. The Apostle evidently expects a present personal influence from Christ to be exerted upon men's hearts. All those movements in our hearts, so often neglected, so often resisted, by which we are compelled to a holier life, to a deeper love, to a more unworldly consecration,—all these, rightly understood, are Christ's directions. He leads us, though often we do not not know the hand that guides; and every Christian may be sure of this—and he is sinful if he does not live up to the height of his privileges—that the ancient promises are more than fulfilled in his experience, and that he has a present Christ, an in-dwelling Christ, who will be his Shepherd, and lead him by green pastures and still waters sometimes, and through valleys of darkness and rough defiles sometimes, but always with the purpose of bringing him nearer and nearer to the full possession of the love of God and the patience of Christ.

III. Notice the heart's yielding to its Guide. If this was Paul's prayer for his converts, it should be our aim for ourselves. Christ is ready to direct our hearts, if we will let Him. All depends on our yielding to that sweet direction, loving as that of a mother's hand on her child's shoulder.

A. MACLAREN, *Paul's Prayers*, p. 25.

Chap. iii., vers. 6-18.

I. IN this passage the Apostle teaches the Thessalonians that in tranquillity, sedateness of heart and life, they are severally, not

only to work, but to do their own work, and so have need of no man. Thus the bread which is their own will be doubly sweet to them. If we revert to the military metaphor which underlies the word "disorderly," and may also underlie the word "withdraw," we may place another saying of the Apostle into connection with these injunctions. "Every man shall bear his own burden,"—his own proper and personal load. The word is used to signify a soldier's kit or knapsack. In Christian warfare, then, each faithful soldier must see that he has his own weight, and that he does not encumber another with it, or take up another's instead of his own. All acts of this kind are a walking disorderly.

II. Believers then have daily work to do; not only Christian work, but all work done in a Christian spirit. The record of their days must never be like that said to have been found in the diary of Louis XVI., after the first French Revolution, the simple word occurring on almost every page, "Nothing, nothing!" Time rather must be redeemed, not wasted.

III. "But ye, brethren, be not weary in well-doing." The Apostle exhorts them not to lose heart, not to faint as cowards, in doing whatever is honourable and good—all actions which are fair in themselves and blissful in their results. An implied commendation is in the injunction. They are even now engaged in well-doing, and they are urged, by perseverance therein, to show forth "the patience of Christ." There is to be well doing in the widest sense of the word. Surveying the huge circumference of human love, Christ's people are never to faint in the work of leaving the world better than they found it. "In due season we shall reap if we faint not."

J. HUTCHISON, *Lectures on Thessalonians*, p. 322.

REFERENCE: iii. 6-18.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 81.

Chap. iii., ver. 13.—"But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing."

PERSEVERANCE.

I. There is a very great inclination in certain stages of society, and certain periods of our life, to feel a kind of contempt for perseverance. Mere patient labour is thought but meanly of for the most part; we give it all sorts of bad names. We sneer at a *plodder*. We are inclined to fancy when we start in life that great talent—that indefinable power which we call genius—will be sure to bear all before it, and *must* carry the world by storm. By-and-by we get to find that the world is very much larger than we fancied, and that there is a great deal

of talent, nay, a great many geniuses in it, and that eminence is not to be obtained at a bound, but only by long and patient climbing.

II. Even in religion and in the building up of a Christian character, it is perseverance that is of the most vital and essential importance; and that, indeed, without a persevering continuance in the painful practice of what our conscience sanctions and commands, there can be no real godliness, no true religion. If there be one thing more than another which marks the man of genius, it is his courageous steadfastness. They say that the tiger, once baulked in its first spring, will not again renew the charge, but skulks back into the jungle cowed and ashamed. We know that it is ever so with the craven spirits in the world: the first check or discouragement crushes them; they have no heart to recover from a fall. God asks for patience in well-doing; He will have long trial of His wisdom and truth; but they who trust in Him shall not lose their reward.

A. JESSOPP, *Norwich School Sermons*, p. 75.

REFERENCES: iii. 13.—W. Walters, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xx., p. 136; E. Cooper, *Practical Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 95.

Chap. iii., ver. 16.—"Now the Lord of Peace Himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all."

THE Lord of Peace, and the Peace of the Lord.

I. The deepest longing of every human heart is for peace. There are many ways in which the supreme good may be represented, but, perhaps, none of them is so lovely, and exercises such universal fascination of attraction as that which presents it in the form of rest. It is an eloquent testimony to the unrest which tortures every heart, that the promise of peace should to all seem so fair. Rest which is not apathy, rest which is not indolence, rest which is contemporaneous with, and the consequence of, the full wholesome activity of the whole nature in its legitimate directions, that is the thing that we are all longing for. The sea is not stagnant though it be calm; there will be the slow heave of the calm billow, and the wavelets may sparkle in the sunlight, though they be still from all the winds that rave. We want, most of all, peace in our inmost hearts.

II. The Lord of Peace Himself is the only Giver of peace. Christ is the "Lord of Peace" because that tranquillity of heart and spirit, that unruffled calm, which we all see from afar and long to possess, was verily His, in His manhood, during all the

calamities and changes and activities of His earthly life. He sorrowed; He wept; He wondered; He was angry; He pitied; He loved; and yet all these were perfectly consistent with the unruffled calm that marked His whole career. So peace is not stolid indifference. Nor is it to be found in the avoidance of difficult duties, or the cowardly shirking of sacrifices and pains and struggles; but, rather, it is "peace subsisting at the heart of endless agitation," of which the great example stands in Him who was the Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief, and who yet in it all was the Lord of Peace.

III. The peace of the Lord of Peace is perfect. "Give you peace always." That points to perpetual, unbroken duration in time, and through all changing circumstances, which might threaten a less stable and deeply-rooted tranquillity. Christ's peace is perpetual and multiform, unbroken, and presenting itself in all the aspects in which tranquillity is possible for a human spirit.

IV. The Lord of Peace gives it by giving His own presence. When He is in the vessel the waves calm themselves. So, if we are conscious of breaches of our restfulness, interruptions of our tranquillity, by reason of surging, impatient passions and hot desires within ourselves, or by reason of the pressure of outward circumstances, or by reason of our having fallen beneath our consciences and done wrong things, let us understand that the breaches of our peace are not owing to Him, but only to our having let go His hand. It is our own fault if we are ever troubled; if we kept close to Him, we should not be. Keep inside the fortress, and nothing will disturb.

A. MACLAREN, *Paul's Prayers*, p. 37.

I. TIMOTHY.

REFERENCES: i. 1-8.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. ii., p. 59. i. 2.—P. Brooks, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxix., p. 300. i. 4-6.—H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, vol. xiii., p. 132.

Chap. i., ver. 5.—**"The end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned."**

I. TAKING the declaration of the text in its simplicity, and looking out over the Christian world, we are disposed, simply enough, perhaps, on our part, to say what a pity it is that people do not oftener ask themselves amidst all their conscientious observance of Christianity, and all their lifelong toil to do their duty by it, whereunto it all tends; what is the one general effect which He who ordained Christianity as a great commandment for us intended it to produce? Our text points to the fact that the end of the commandment is love; and it goes deeper than that, it shows us out of what love ought to spring. Now if there be a defect of water down in the stream we may expect to find its fountain yielding but scantily. There it will be that the origin of the mischief must be sought, and there that the remedy must be applied. It may appear that the springs are shallow and want deepening, or are uncared for and have been choked up, or both these faults may exist together. "Now the end of the commandment is love, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned."

II. These latter clauses may be regarded as a limitation, a conditioning of the love which is the end of the commandment. The stream is not to receive impure accession, nor is it to lose its distinctive character and quality; and this negative meaning of such expressions in Scripture has ever been the more welcome one in the Church. They have not only a negative, but they have also a strong positive and declaratory force full of instruction to us of this day. The pure heart in our text, out of which that charity which is the end of the commandment is to spring, is plainly of this kind, singleness of purpose without admixture

of side aims and selfish views; and here is one chief root of the evil among ourselves, that the stream with us does not run pure, our hearts are not set, our lives are not devoted to the simple glorification of God by Christ, but to the furtherance of some certain system of opinions or some defined set of agencies which have gathered round, and, for us, embodied the great central purpose of Christianity.

III. "Faith unfeigned" and a "conscience void of offence" are the real source of charity; and the charity which flows from them is no breaker down of conscientious conviction nor of doctrinal purity, no bringer in of indifferentism. That charity which necessitates compromise is of the world, and not of Christ. We need not surrender our differences; they are engraved into the very texture of our conscious life; the faith has taken hold of our hearts by these means. If we were to surrender them, in many cases not the differing belief would be our lot, but the gulf of fatal unbelief. Nay, let us evermore cherish them, seeing that with them is bound up the consistency of our inner life, the unfeignedness of our faith. Let us remember that not victory over one another, not victory in this world at all, is "the end of the commandment," that every blow struck at a member of Christ is a loss to the Church of Christ—a loss to him that is stricken, but a far greater loss to him who strikes.

H. ALFORD, *Penny Pulpit*, New Series, No. 306.

REFERENCES: i. 8.—L. D. Bevan, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 404. i. 8-11.—H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, vol. xxiii., p. 147. i. 8-17.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. ii., p. 131.

Chap. i., ver. 9.—"The law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane."

THE Law our Schoolmaster.

There are some points in which we feel practically that we are not under the law, but dead to it; that the law is not made for us; but do we think, therefore, that we may surrender, rob and burn, or do we not feel that such a notion would be little short of madness? We are not under the law, because we do not need it. And just of this kind is that general freedom from the law of which St. Paul speaks, as the high privilege of true Christians.

I. There is no doubt that the Gospel wishes to consider us as generally dead to the law, in order that we may really become so continually more and more. It supposes that the Spirit of

God, presenting to our minds the sight of God's love in Christ, sets us free from the law of sin and death; that is, that a sense of thankfulness to God, and love of God and of Christ, will be so strong a motive that we shall, generally speaking, need no other, that it will so work upon us as to make us feel good, easy, and delightful, and thus to become dead to the law. And there is no doubt, also, that that same freedom from the law, which we ourselves experience daily in respect of some particular great crimes, that very freedom is felt by good men in many other points, where it may be that we ourselves do not feel it. A common instance may be given with respect to prayer and the outward worship of God. There are a great many who feel this as a duty; but there are many also to whom it is not so much a duty as a privilege and a pleasure; and these are dead to the law which commands us to be instant in prayer, just as we, in general, are dead to the law which commands us to do no murder.

II. But observe that St. Paul does not suppose the best Christian to be without the law altogether; there will ever be some points in which he will need to remember it. And so it is unkindness, rather than kindness, and a very mischievous mistake, to forget that here, in this our preparatory life, the law cannot cease altogether with any one; that it is not possible to find a perfect sense and feeling of right existing in every action; nay, that it is even unreasonable to seem to expect it. Punishment will exist eternally so long as there is evil, and the only way of remaining for ever entirely strangers to it is by adhering for ever and entirely to good.

T. ARNOLD, *Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 69.

Chap. i., ver. 11.—"The glorious Gospel of the blessed God."

We have here—

I. A recommendation of the Gospel; and this we see lies in two things, in its having such an Author; it is "the Gospel of the blessed God"; and, secondly, in its being in itself of such a nature or character; it is "the glorious Gospel." Here are two points that lie much across the line of our present thinking, which tends to make little of God, and to put the universe in the place of God, and also to make little of the Gospel, and see in it no glory. But as Christians we are bound to resist these tendencies, and to exalt the Gospel as having such an Author, and also as being what it is in its own nature. The Gospel is

glorious (1) in its doctrines, (2) in its morals, (3) in its ordinances.

II. Consider our duty towards the Gospel. It was, says Paul, committed to my trust. He was a steward, and a good steward of the manifold grace of God. How manifold has that grace been in, and with him. He is still, after eighteen hundred years, a front actor in the scene of human things. His words are carried, by those who will themselves be immortal, into the darkest places of the world's sin and misery. How shall we who are Christians meet this duty of stewardship? There is (1) the duty of preservation. Is he a steward who suffers the property to be wasted and dilapidated, with which he is entrusted? Let us remember Paul's own words here, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." (2) The duty of transmission. We are to do what we can to bring more truth out of God's word; but we shall never succeed if we break our succession with the past, and do not hand on its treasures to the future. (3) The duty of diffusion.

J. CAIRNS, *Christ the Morning Star*, p. 352.

I. THE Gospel declares itself to be God's greatest answer to man's greatest want. The Gospel does not profess to be one answer among many. It claims to be the one answer which God makes to the problem of sin, and the agony of sorrow. The Gospel does not speak with hesitating, diffident tone. It does not put itself in an excusatory attitude. It does not ask to be heard on sufferance, and to be judged by some modified law of criticism. It stands clear out in the daylight. It says, in personal language, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." So far it establishes some claim on our attention, if not upon our confidence, by its very boldness, by the heroic sentiment that is in it. It is one of two things. The issue is an issue sharply defined. Either the Gospel is the most gigantic and self-convicting imposition, or it merits the epithet "glorious," as describing its scope, and its Divine meaning. The Gospel of the blessed God claims to be as necessary to redemption, and sanctification, and glorification of the soul as the sun, the air, the dew, the earth claim to be necessary to the growth of your food, and to the maintenance of your physical system.

II. Being God's greatest answer to man's greatest want, the Gospel must supply that which is most needful to man. Let us suppose that it is admitted that man is a sinner. The thing

most acceptable to man under such circumstances is pardon. This is precisely what the Gospel proposes to give to all who accept it. Through this Man, Christ Jesus, is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins. He who sees and feels the darkness of guilt will best comprehend, and most truly appreciate the lustre and dazzling effulgence of God's great offer of redemption. Pardon is not enough. When God pardons, there is another step involved, and another element enters into consideration. Man becomes not only pardoned—he becomes also holy. When a man sees the possibility of holiness, when he sees through Christ what men may become, then he tramples under foot all theories, all morals, all human suggestions and desires, and fixing his eye upon Christ and His truth, he says, There, and there only, have I found the glorious Gospel.

PARKER, *City Temple*, 1871, p. 85.

REFERENCES: i. 11.—A. Maclaren, *Christ in the Heart*, p. 271; H. P. Liddon, *Advent Sermons*, vol. i., p. 126; *Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. i., p. 47; A. Maclaren, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 376; *Ibid.*, vol. xxxiii., p. 342; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. x., p. 101.

Chap. i., vers. 12, 13.

IN the text we have—

I. A humiliating and painful recollection. Men should diligently study the true uses of the past. The past is rightly used—(1) when it deepens our sense of personal guilt; (2) when it illustrates the greatness of Divine mercy; (3) when it inspires with courage in regard to the future.

II. A humiliating and painful recollection relieved by the highest consideration. "I obtained mercy." The fact that sin must be met by the mercy of God shows (1) that sin deserves punishment, (2) that escape from such punishment can only be secured by the sovereign mercy of God, (3) that there must be a personal realisation of the Divine mercy.

III. A humiliating and painful experience succeeded by a holy and sublime vocation. The fact that Jesus Christ employs converted sinners in the ministry of His Gospel serves three important purposes—(1) It puts the minister into moral sympathy with his hearers; (2) it exemplifies the power of the Gospel to do what it proposes; (3) it stimulates the study of Divine things. Application: (1) This text appeals to the *worst* of men—blasphemers, persecutors, injurious; (2) explains the vehemence and urgency of an earnest ministry; (3) exalts and illustrates the infinite mercy of Jesus Christ.

PARKER, *City Temple*, vol. i., p. 58.

Chap. i., ver. 13.—"Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief."

I. CHRISTIANITY is not a mere magical charm, nor a universal quack medicine: it is a Divine method and plan of salvation. There are different things to be saved from, and by different methods Christ saves us; and coming to Him and learning meekness is humbly submitting to His way. His forgiveness is as sure as the throne of God, and if you have no peace, it is because you do not believe in Christ, and in His saving revelation; and until you simply accept in fullest faith Christ's revelation, and a Heavenly Father forgiving impiety, transgression, and sin, you cannot have peace. It quite depends upon yourself; there is no change necessary in God, and it is written, "Even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." He hath forgiven thee, thou penitent sinner, but if thou wilt not believe it, then the clouds will remain. But remember the clouds are not of the heaven, they are of the earth.

II. Now it is quite certain that the work of complete salvation from any firmly founded habit must be long and wearisome; and one reason why there is so little moral salvation is, that while men spend months or years in learning an art, or a language, they expect by a prayer or two once a week to become new creatures in Christ Jesus. In some cases, you must go on trying, and watching, and praying, until you do. But, you say, this is desperately hard work; it is giving up one's life to it. But this is just what Christ says; this is just His method of salvation. "He that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for My sake, the same shall find it." If you want a ticket to get into heaven when you can sin no more on earth, I do not know where it is to be had; but if you would be saved from sin, you must work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

W. PAGE ROBERTS, *Reasonable Service*, p. 104.

Chap. i., ver. 15.—"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."

YOUR Own Salvation.

I. What was the particular sin from which St. Paul had to be saved, the salvation from which made him a new creature in Christ Jesus, that old things passed away, and all things became new? It was not a sin of morals, in the general sense of

the word; it was a sin of ignorance, by which he was led into deeds of cruelty and wrong. The Christians, so it seemed to his blinded eyes, were against God and Fatherland, and anyhow they must be put down. They were unbelievers, and infidels, and destructives, and all power must be kept from them, and they must be crushed down, even if it did look cruel; the honour of God, and the welfare of their country required it. Better that a few should be imprisoned or stoned, that the whole nation perish not; and so, like many another persecutor of old and modern times, with prayer to God, and virtuous living, he went to root out the false doctrines and the false preachers.

II. St. Paul was saved by Christ from a false and mistaken view. His old ardent and upright character remained the same, but it had a new direction, a new intention, a new Lord and Master. He meant well as he rode along that noonday with Damascus in view. He was a pillar of orthodoxy, and zealous for the faith; he was, so it seemed to him, doing a service for God and religion, when suddenly the piercing words which rent his soul were heard. He saw his errors, all his terrible blunder with its sin; it pleased God to make a change in his thoughts and perceptions; it pleased God to *reveal* His Son within him; and not from his old virtuous and God-fearing life, but from his false views and misleading ignorance did the Heavenly Father save him.

W. PAGE ROBERTS, *Reasonable Service*, p. 91.

REFERENCES: i. 15.—J. H. Wilson, *The Gospel and its Fruits*, p. 23; A. W. Hare, *The Alton Sermons*, p. 124; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvii., p. 284; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xv., p. 236; E. Cooper, *Practical Sermons*, vol. i., p. 111; H. P. Liddon, *Advent Sermons*, vol. i., p. 317; *Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. ii., p. 419; *Good Words*, vol. vi., p. 47. i. 15-17.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxxi., No. 1837; J. Baldwin Brown, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxii., pp. 305, 340; *Ibid.*, vol. xxxi., p. 65; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. i., p. 357. i. 16.—R. Roberts, *My Later Ministry*, p. 213; H. W. Beecher, *Sermons*, 1870, p. 476; E. White, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxiv., p. 136; E. Cooper, *Practical Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 158; T. J. Crawford, *The Preaching of the Cross*, p. 236; *Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. ii., p. 203; *Ibid.*, 3rd series, vol. vi., p. 168. i. 17.—L. D. Bevan, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 404; A. Dunning, *Ibid.*, vol. xxix., p. 28; Bishop Westcott, *The Historic Faith*, p. 215.

Chap. i., ver. 18.—"That thou mightest war a good warfare."

THERE are some respects in which the idea of warfare applies to the life of all, and there are other respects in which we are

called to make our life a warfare of our own free and deliberate choice.

I. Take, for example, the period of infancy and childhood, and here we have emphatically the battle (1) of weakness. Later comes (2) the battle of ignorance, (3) the battle of passion, (4) the battle of necessity and the battle of society conjoined. We observe (*a*) that the struggle is not equally intense and painful in us all, and (*b*) that it is not all struggle with any. No human spirit could bear a perpetual strain, no human heart could support a perpetual pressure.

II. Scripture commands us to make our life a warfare of our own free and deliberate choice. Notice the manner in which this spiritual warfare is to be carried on. (1) The first thing to be done is to put ourselves in alliance with Christ. It cannot be accomplished in any other way. The battle must begin at the cross, and the warfare must be carried on, from beginning to end, under the covert of atoning blood. (2) It must be maintained in a spirit of prayer, for it is this that preserves our reliance on God, and makes us strong in the strength which is in Christ Jesus. It is such a conflict as requires a better strength than our own, and if this were all we had to depend on it would be useless making the attempt. (3) The struggle must be maintained honestly. That is to say, we must direct our attention to the resistance of *all* evil, and to the positive cultivation of *all* good. (3) We must maintain the warfare cheerfully, not as a dire necessity, but as that which is evidently proper and right, that in which our reason and heart were fully engaged, as that which is daily bringing us nearer to God, and making us more and more meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

A. L. SIMPSON, *The Upward Path*, p. 57.

Chap. i., vers. 18-19.—"This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare," etc.

NOT the least interesting feature of St. Paul's first epistle to Timothy is the Apostle's solicitude, here and there incidentally manifesting itself, for his youthful disciple's own steadfastness in the midst of the dangers from which he is set to guard others. It is the natural language of a father, who, with the highest opinion of his son's character, still cannot but remember his youth and inexperience. This is no slight confirmation of the authenticity of the writing. The office committed to Timothy

is described as a warfare, and if we would prove ourselves true men, and carry on the warfare successfully, we must keep, hold fast, maintain, these two requisites—faith and a good conscience. They were required at our first enlistment for that warfare, being, in fact, equivalent to the profession and engagements made at our baptism, and they will be required till the end.

I. Faith is to things beyond the reach of sense what our senses are to things within its reach. It is the soul's eye, by which we can see what with the bodily eye we cannot see; the soul's ear, by which we hear what with the bodily ear we cannot hear; the soul's hand, by which we handle what with the bodily hand we cannot handle. Faith has to do with this conflict (1) because it recognises it as a reality, (2) because it serves to obtain both strength and succour for us from God, (3) because it supplies us with motives for endurance, (4) it supplies the hope of success. For it gives us confidence in our Leader, and assures us of victory, provided only we be true to Him, who has chosen us to be His soldiers. The battle is not ours, but God's.

II. But, besides faith, St. Paul mentions another requisite for carrying on the warfare to which we are called—a good conscience. By a good conscience is meant the testimony of our consciences that we are loyal and true to our Leader, that we are, in will and intention at least, obedient to His commands, however, in spite of our better selves, we may, too often, fall short of them.

III. "Which some," says the Apostle, "having put away, concerning faith, have made shipwreck." The point now is not merely the necessity of a good conscience in order to our warring the Christian warfare, but the necessity of a good conscience in order to the preservation of faith. The persons whom he had in view had either given up the belief of Christianity as a whole—had become apostates, or, like those whom he particularises, had fallen into heresy, and had perverted or abandoned one or more of its cardinal truths. That they had done so he ascribes to their having put away a good conscience. The putting away of a good conscience, by whatever act or course of action, grieves the Holy Spirit, who, as He is the Author of faith in the first instance, so He is the Preserver and Conservator of it thenceforward. And, together with the departure of the Spirit, there departs the frame of mind which is most congenial whether to the reception or the rejection of the truth. Note (1) that it is important our conscience should

be rightly instructed. A watch only misleads if it be not duly regulated. We are responsible for our consciences, as well as for the conduct dictated by these consciences. If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness. (2) If we would maintain a good conscience, we must beware of deliberate, wilful transgression, whether by doing what ought not to be done, or by leaving undone what ought to be done. With either one or the other a good conscience is utterly incompatible. Be thoroughly persuaded that to do and suffer God's will is your truest interest.

C. HEURTLEY, *Oxford and Cambridge Journal*, Jan. 27th, 1881.

REFERENCES: i. 18—ii. 8.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. ii., p. 209; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 550.

Chap. i., ver. 19.

SHIPWRECK of Faith.

I. Observe, there are two things which St. Paul tells Timothy, he must hold fast, "faith" and "a good conscience." By faith he means the articles of Christian doctrine, especially belief in the Lord Jesus Christ; and by a good conscience I suppose him to mean purity of life; so that to hold faith and a good conscience, to be steady in maintaining the faith once delivered to the saints from all errors and encroachments, and to adorn the doctrine by a life of piety and Christian love, may be said to be the course marked out for Timothy by his teacher, St. Paul, as the course worthy of a Christian bishop. So far all is clear. Now comes the difficulty—"Which some, having put away concerning faith, have made shipwreck." The word *which* applies only to the good conscience, "some, having put away a good conscience, have made shipwreck concerning faith."

II. You have a Christian faith to hold and a Christian life to lead; do not look at them one apart from the other; your faith is the support of your life, but also your faith will dwindle and decay if you try to let it stand alone; some have tried the experiment of divorcing these from one another, they have pretended to hold the faith, but they have been careless concerning a pure conscience, and a terrible experiment it has proved: their faith has perished, they have been shipwrecked and ruined. The kind of shipwreck of faith which I should fear is the loss of faith in Christ as a living and active principle, the loss of the distinct feeling of love to Christ, the loss of that feeling of allegiance to Him as our personal living Lord and Master, which is of the very essence of Christian faith. The grand secret of

Christian life and health is to hold together those things which God has joined, to hold faith and a good conscience, and to remember that carelessness about the one may probably lead to shipwreck concerning the other.

HARVEY GOODWIN, *Parish Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 289.

REFERENCES: i. 19.—J. Thain Davidson, *The City Youth*, p. 53; R. C. Trench, *Shipwrecks of Faith*, p. 3; A. Davies, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 245. ii. 1, 2.—H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, vol. iii, p. 156; W. M. Statham, *Ibid.*, p. 217; *Ibid.*, vol. iv., p. 332. ii. 3.—F. W. Farrar, *Ibid.*, vol. xv., p. 145. ii. 3, 4.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxvi., No. 1516. ii. 3-5.—E. White, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxiv., p. 145. ii. 4.—J. Vaughan, *Fifty Sermons*, 9th series, p. 205.

Chap. ii., ver. 5.—"The man Christ Jesus."

"THE man Christ Jesus." The very absence of all qualifying epithets makes the designation unique and solemn. There is a majesty about it which inspires awe. There is a grace in it which wins love and trust. It is not the holy man, the righteous man, the gracious man. It is simply "the man Christ Jesus."

I. He is the man all through; out and out the man. In soul, body, spirit; in look, voice, carriage, walk; in mind, heart, feeling, affection; He is out and out, through and through, the man.

II. He is simply man throughout; in every exigency, in every trial, simply man—the man Christ Jesus. In all His earthly and human experiences you never find Him other than man, you never find Him less than man, and you never find Him more than man. That He is more than man you believe and are sure, for you see His Divine works of charity and power; you see how He saves others. But from the manner in which He fulfils His own obligations, meets His own temptations, and bears His own sufferings, you would never gather this.

III. He is the man exclusively, pre-eminently, *par excellence*, to the absolute exclusion of all others; He is the man, complete and perfect. Not a man made up of the most select remains of manhood, among men as they have lived since the Fall. He is the man as God originally made man, perfect, absolutely and indivisibly one and perfect—the man Christ Jesus.

IV. He is the man to mediate between God and man.

V. He is the man to give Himself a ransom for all.

VI. He is the man to be testified in due time. Whatever the time, whatever the season, it is a due time, a fitting season, for His being testified to thee by the Spirit as being present

with thee. As thou walkest the streets, or journeyest along the road, He talks with thee by the way, and opens to thee the Scriptures concerning Himself; the man Christ Jesus, who taught this of old in Galilee and Jewry, speaking as never man spoke.

R. S. CANDLISH, *Sermons*, p. 24.

REFERENCES: ii. 5.—F. Wagstaff, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xv., p. 407. ii. 5, 6.—*Church of England Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 243; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. viii., p. 197.

Chap. ii., ver. 8.—"I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting."

THE Prayer of Faith.

I. God is infinite, and the laws of nature, like nature itself, are finite. These methods of working, therefore—which correspond to the physical element in us—do not *exhaust* His agency. There is a boundless residue of disengaged faculty beyond. As yet, you have but reached the precinct of His being. Behind and amid all the punctualities of law, abides in infinite remainder, the living and unpledged spirit of God; the traces which he prints on nature are but as the waving water-line with which the breakers meet the beach; but horizon after horizon beyond, the same tide sweeps alone, and there is the play of ten thousand waves with neither reef nor shore to bring them to account; so is it with the deep mind of God, out beyond the limit of contact with nature, its energy is not bound to take any given shape, thrown up and determined by its previous force, but is free to rise and play and lapse into itself again. Here, he has made no rule but the everlasting rule of holiness, and gives no pledge but the pledge of inexhaustible love.

II. In man there are two elements, the physical and the spiritual; in God there are two agencies, also physical and spiritual. It follows of itself that what is physical in us is subjected to what comes physically from Him; while that which is spiritual in us is open to communication from what lives spiritually in Him. We must accommodate ourselves to the stern mechanism of God's natural laws, and then He will succour us, not by *altering* them, but by *inspiring* us—by lifting us to bear their burden—by throwing open to us the almightiness of His companionship, and the shelter of His love. Wherever elements of character enter the result, so that it will differ according to the moral agent's attitude of mind, it is plainly not beyond the reach of a purely spiritual influence to modify a temporal event. The prayer of

Cromwell's soldiers kneeling on the field could not lessen the numbers, or blunt the weapons of the Cavaliers, but might give such fire of zeal and coolness of thought, as to turn each man into an organ of almighty justice, and carry the victory which he implored. Wherever the living contact between the human spirit and the Divine, can set in operation our very considerable control over the combinations and processes of the natural world, there is still left a scope, practically indefinite, for prayer that the bitter cup of outward suffering may pass away; only never without that trustful relapse, "Not My will, but Thine, be done."

J. MARTINEAU, *Hours of Thought*, vol. ii., p. 220.

REFERENCES: ii. 8.—A. Blomfield, *Sermons in Town and Country*, p. 286. ii. 9-15.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. ii., p. 317. ii. 13, 14.—T. Gasquoine, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 182. ii. 19.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 13. iii. 1-7.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. ii., p. 396. iii. 8-15.—*Ibid.*, p. 465.

Chap. iii., ver. 9.—"Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience."

I. LOOK at the remarkable combination of revelation and truth, and conscience which the text exhibits. The Apostle knew nothing or cared nothing for those controversies between revelation and conscience, or faith and conscience, or authority and conscience which now agitate men's minds. As these several things presented themselves to his mind there were no rival claims to be adjusted between them. Is Christian doctrine to be accepted because it is a Divine revelation of the evidence of which faith is to judge? or is it to be accepted because, and only as far as it commends itself to the human conscience? Modern writers have a great deal to say on this question. St. Paul had simply nothing—nothing, at least, that he thought it necessary to say. Faith, and a pure conscience with him went hand in hand. Both were necessary, and there was no need to decide the limits of their respective domains. He had united them together in his direct charge to Timothy himself. He now unites them again in stating his qualifications for the first step in the ministry. A good conscience is the natural element in which a sound faith exists. Therefore, the man who deliberately thrusts away from him the former, renders himself incapable of holding the latter, or at least places himself in great danger of making shipwreck of it. A true faith cannot live in an impure heart, though it may be there dormant and inactive. Indulgence in sin, which obscures the lesser light of

man's moral nature, must at length hide out the view of God Himself, though we have the promise of our Lord that the pure in heart shall eventually see God, and from which we may infer that it is darkness and sin alone that can entirely obscure Him. Yet we cannot doubt the fact that purity of outward life may co-exist with unbelief. It does not, however, by any means necessarily follow that purity of outward life involves that purity of heart to which our Lord's promise is attached. With regard to it, the teaching of the New Testament is no way doubtful. The power within man which triumphs over the strength of his natural corruption is the power of faith, faith in Christ as an ever-living Redeemer, and that faith is an instrument in the hands of the Holy Spirit, by which He works upon the hearts of men. It is thus alone, according to the teaching of the New Testament, that true purity of heart can be attained so far as man in his present state is capable of attaining it.

II. The idea which any man forms of the evil of sin, must depend upon the purity of his conscience; and it therefore follows that purity of conscience is an important element in determining our belief upon such doctrines as the Incarnation and the Atonement, or to use the words of the text, that those parts of the mystery of faith must be held in a pure conscience. And the same may be said of any conception of God which includes the idea of holiness as a part of His character. It is true that all our ideas of holiness are relative and imperfect, as are the teachings of conscience itself; but what idea of beauty, and excellence, and holiness, can be formed by one whose own heart and conscience are defiled, or how can such an one form any conception of the holiness of Him who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. The mystery of that faith whose seat is in the heart and conscience cannot abide in an impure dwelling-place. From the polluted sanctuary are heard the ominous words—the cry of a lost faith: "Let us depart hence."

J. H. JELLETT, *Oxford and Cambridge Journal*, June 7th, 1877.

REFERENCE: iii. 9.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. vi., p. 61.

Chap. iii., ver. 13.—"For they that have used the office of a Deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus."

THE Good Degree.

I. In what consists the good degree? It consists in a higher state of spiritual life—a stronger faith, a higher hope, a

more entrancing and captivating love; in short, a larger possession of God, as if the Deity within flung His own grace and glory over the soul in which He dwells. That such a state is both possible and blessed, a state to be desired above all other things, will be readily admitted. For that person must be unfortunate, who has not in the circle of his acquaintance some such saint, whose whole soul is aflame with God, and who walks around the familiar objects of daily life, consecrating with his own beauty every act and deed, and reflecting in a face like the face of an angel, the shining of the light that fills the soul within.

II. But a good degree includes a further idea, and that is a higher state in glory, a place nearer God in the world to come, a more perfect knowledge of Him, and a more entrancing enjoyment of Him for ever and ever. This, we must bear in mind, springs from the other, and is but its completion. Grace is but the preparation for glory, the blossom of which glory is the ripened fruit. The hope of such a reward is a grand and elevating sentiment, far above those gross elements, which have led some to regard the hope of reward as an unworthy motive for a Christian. We need not attempt to be superior to our Master, who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross. The bestowment of any reward at all is wonderful when the work is all of grace. But our gracious Master knows that we have need of the stimulus of it, and He has made it worthy of Himself.

E. GARBETT, *Experiences of the Inner Life*, p. 95.

REFERENCES: iii. 13.—*Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xvii., p. 73; vol. xxi., p. 285.

Chap. iii., ver. 15.—"The Church of the living God."

I. I CANNOT think of the Christian Church as if it were a selection out of humanity. In its idea it is humanity. The hard, iron-faced man whom I meet upon the street, the degraded, sad-faced man who goes to prison, the weak, silly-faced man who haunts society, the discouraged sad-faced man who drags the chain of drudgery—they are all members of the Church, members of Christ, children of God, heirs of the kingdom of heaven. Their birth made them so. Their baptism declared the truth which their birth made true. It is impossible to estimate their lives aright, unless we give this truth concerning them the first importance. Think, too, what would be the meaning of the other sacrament, if this thought of the Church of the living God were real and universal. The

Lord's Supper, the right and need of every man to feed on God, the bread of Divine sustenance, the wine of Divine inspiration offered to every man, and turned by every man into whatever form of spiritual force the duty and the nature of each man requires, how grand and glorious its mission might become! No longer the mystic source of unintelligible influence; no longer certainly the test of arbitrary orthodoxy; no longer the initiation rite of a selected brotherhood, but the great sacrament of man! The seeker after truth, with all the world of truth freely open before him, would come to the Lord's table, to refresh the freedom of his soul, to liberate his soul from slavery and prejudice. The soldier going forth to battle, the student leaving college, the merchant getting ready for a sharp financial crisis, all men full of passion for their work, would come then to the Lord's Supper to fill their passion with the Divine fire of consecration. They would meet and keep their unity in beautiful diversity—this Christian Church around the Christian feast. There is no other rallying place for all the good activity and worthy hopes of man. It is in the power of the great Christian sacrament, the great human sacrament, to become that rallying place.

II. And then the ministry, the ministers, what a life theirs must be, whenever the Church thus comes to realise itself! We talk to-day, as if the ministers of the Church were consecrated for the people. The old sacerdotal idea of substitution has not died away. What is the release from such a false idea? Not to teach that the ministers are not consecrated, but to teach that all the people are; not to deny the priesthood of the clergy, but to assert the priesthood of all men. When that great chain is made, and justified in life, then, and not till then, lordship over God's heritage shall disappear, and the true greatness of the minister, as the fellow-worker with, and servant of, the humblest and most struggling child of God, shall shine out on the world.

III. Yet once more, here must be seen the true place and dignity of truth and doctrine. It is not knowledge anywhere that is the end and purpose of man's labour or of God's government. It is life. It is the full activity of powers. Knowledge is a means to that. Why is it that the Church has magnified doctrine overmuch and throned it where it does not belong. It is because the Church has not cared enough for life. She has not over-valued doctrine; she has under-valued life. When the Church learns that she is, in her idea, simply identical with all nobly active humanity, when she thinks of herself as the true

inspirer and purifier of all the life of man, then she will—what? not cast her doctrines away, as many of her impetuous advisers would have her do. She will see their value as she has never seen it yet; but she will hold them always as the means of life, and she will insist that out of their depths they shall send forth manifest strength for life, which shall justify her holding them.

PHILLIPS BROOKS, *Twenty Sermons*, p. 42.

REFERENCES: iii. 15. — Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. vi., No. 393; vol. xxiv., No. 1436; J. Irons, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 359; *Plain Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 177. iii. 15, 16.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. iii., p. 74; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. viii., p. 207.

Chap. iii., ver. 16.—**"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."**

I. NOTE the facts recorded. These you will perceive to be points in the life of our Lord, commencing with His incarnation, and, reaching through the intermediate period, to the time of His final exaltation. Take away the Divinity of Christ, and His example, and His teaching, and His promises lose their power, and the whole body of faith becomes cold and formal as a carcase from which the living spirit has fled.

II. The greatness of the mystery involved in these facts. Wonderful beyond the thoughts of man are the manner and the completeness and the glory of redeeming love.

III. The practical lessons to be derived from these thoughts. (1) Foremost of all is the duty of believing and accepting this wondrous redemption, as alike due to God and necessary for ourselves. To know the will of a Saviour, and the sufficiency of His redeeming merits, and the glory of the inheritance which He has prepared for His people, will but aggravate despair if we are cut off from personal participation in them. (2) Again, we ought to give to these blessed hopes of salvation an importance predominant above all things else in the world. They ought to occupy the same place in our own estimate of life as they occupy in the dealings of God towards mankind. There we see that they are the first and the last, the Alpha and Omega of all. (3) See how vast is the debt of gratitude we owe to Him, who bought us with His blood. All we have, and all we are—our zeal; our worship; our praise; our faith, though it never fainted; our hope, though it never grew weak; our love, though it never was chilled, would be but a poor instalment of

its payment. It will be the glory and bliss of heaven to go on for ever fathoming its length, and breadth, and depth, and height, and yet for ever to find it towering upward above our utmost thought, in the infiniteness of that love which passeth knowledge.

E. GARBETT, *The Soul's Life*, p. 76.

Joy to All People—a Christmas Homily.

Every revelation is either an enigma or the solution of an enigma,—a riddle or the reading of a riddle, according as we approach it. In the one case, it is a "mystery," in the human sense; in the other case, it is a "mystery," in the Divine sense; in the sense which mystery uniformly bears in Scripture—not an unfathomable, inscrutable dogma, to which the mind must bow in its formal utterance, without endeavouring, without expecting to comprehend it, but a secret which God has told for the edification, for the comfort, of an inquiring, a perplexed, a struggling soul.

I. Which of us has not oftentimes felt the pressure upon him of the want of God. In seasons of adversity, of disappointment, of sickness, of sorrow, of anxiety, of loneliness, of the conviction of sin, who would not give anything for the personal assurance that he has God Himself with him. Nothing less than Incarnation—which is the incorporation of God with the creature—could have enabled God to feel with us in our trials. He rested not in words of pity, nor in acts of help, but came Himself to be one of us: surely this was a wonderful addition to what could otherwise have been; surely it is enough to make the Incarnation the most blessed of His gifts, and this festival of Christmas the brightest and happiest of our year.

II. The Incarnation is the key to Gospel doctrine, in both parts. It brings together the dignity of the body and the supremacy of the spirit. It says to us, God Himself, when He would deal most intimately with His creatures, began by taking to Himself a body. In that body He tabernacled through a lifetime, submitted even to grow in stature and wisdom, to eat and to drink, to sleep and to awaken, to speak, and pray, and work, to die, and to rise, to ascend into glory. Thus He taught us by His own example, how this framework of the body may be consecrated to His use, how even the spirit needs it for action, how the work even of eternity will want a body, glorified, but not destroyed, to do it as it must be done. The Incarnation, mysterious in one sense, is the key to all mysteries in another. God gives it, if not as an explanation, yet as a

reconciliation ; showing us, in Christ, how the body is honoured, and what is its place in the economy of the fulness of time. For action alike, and for communion, an incorporeal being is but half a man. Let us rest in nothing short of the full Christian doctrine. *Tidings of great joy*, the angel called it who came with it from God's presence. *Joy to all people* he further called it, as though to remind us that the Emmanuel of our being, the God with us, was equally necessary to high and low, to rich and poor, to youth and age, to health and sickness, to life and death. The Desire of all nations is come to His temple, and that temple is the heart of mankind.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Words of Hope*, p. 1.

THE Mystery of Godliness.

I. The mystery of godliness may properly be taken as the description of God's dealings with mankind. How impossible it is for us to comprehend, even in a moderate extent, the dark, mysterious riddles which we meet with in the history of the world ; the mere existence of evil there ; the existence of a power competing with that of God Himself, and a power so strong as sometimes to appear capable of baffling the Holy Spirit of God ; the existence of one whose position is such that he could venture to say to the Lord : " The kingdoms of the earth are committed to me, and to whomsoever I will I give them."

II. The simplest Christian, who knows very little, it may be, of the history of the world, may find abundant evidence of the mysteriousness of God's dealings if he looks into the mystery of himself. If he regards his life as a thing for him to speculate upon and unravel, then, forthwith, he will lose himself, and he will find endless riddles such as no human wit can solve ; the guide has been a pillar of cloud after all, a cloud which may be followed as a safe guide in the wilderness, but into which, if he penetrate, he will inevitably lose his way.

III. If, then, we find that mystery essentially belongs to the revelations of God ; if we find that in all there is light enough to guide, but not light enough to puff men up, as though they were able to comprehend the infinite, why should we not expect to find the same character of mystery belonging to the revelation of God to men in Jesus Christ ? Here, above all, God gives light enough for guidance, but not light enough for unbounded speculation. It is good for us that the gate of godliness should be a gate of humility ; it is good for us that we should admire the mercy of God, while we confess His ways to

be past finding out; it is good that, as the elders cast down their crowns before the throne, so we should throw down all pride of intellect and self-conceit, and walk humbly with God.

HARVEY GOODWIN, *Parish Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 274.

FEW words in the New Testament have ever been more strangely misinterpreted than these; few could be found which have been equally perverted, inasmuch as they have been used to inculcate notions the very opposite to their real meaning. They have been constantly quoted as speaking of the darkness and difficulty of some points in Christianity, whereas their real purpose is to commend the great and glorious nature of these truths which it has made known.

I. The substance of the Gospel revelation is, that God was manifest in the flesh, and justified in the Spirit; that He was seen of angels, and preached to the Gentiles; that He was believed on in the world, and received up into glory. This, then, is the mystery of godliness; this is the great truth, unknown and undiscoverable by our unaided reason, which the Gospel has now made known to us. The knowledge of God the Father is not called a mystery, because a mystery, in the language of the Apostles, means a truth revealed which we could not have found out if it had not been told us. Yet, as experience has shown that men did not, in fact, make themselves acquainted with God the Father, so it has been mercifully ordered that even what we could have discovered if we would, has yet been expressly revealed to us; and the Law and the Prophets are no less full and plain in pointing out our relations to God the Father, than the Gospel is in pointing out our relations to God the Son and God the Holy Ghost.

II. True it is, that the Bread of Life does not nourish us all, and, instead of seeing that the fault is in ourselves, and that with our sickly bodies the most wholesome food will lose its virtue, we are apt to question the power and usefulness of the food itself. True it is, that if we were but good and holy, it would be an idle question to ask about our faith, when our lives sufficiently declare it. But not more foolish is it to suppose that a man can be strong and healthy without wholesome food, than to think that we can be good and holy without a Christian's faith. Those who have tried it know that without that faith they would be nothing at all, and that, in whatever degree they have overcome the world and themselves, it is owing to their faith in the promises of God the Father, resting on the atonement of the

blood of His Son, and given and strengthened by the abiding aid and comfort of the Holy Spirit.

T. ARNOLD, *Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 70.

I. To live on the edge of mystery is the very condition of our being. If we begin to discard doctrines from the Christian scheme because they are mysteries, it is hard to say where the process will end. Discard the Trinity, there remains the Incarnation. Discard the Incarnation, there remains the Atonement. Discard the Atonement, there remains the life of Christ, the miracles of Christ. Discard St. Paul, there remains the Church—there remains, without adequate explanation, the world's history for eighteen hundred years.

II. There is no attempt in the Bible to conceal the fact that the Revelation which it conveys is mysterious. It is not unnatural that the human mind, in its pride of conquest and of power, should chafe impatiently under limitations which make it conscious of its feebleness. But it is not for us to fix the conditions of the Divine gifts. The brightest things are ever the most dazzling. We cannot gaze full in the face of the noonday sun; and the darkness in which God hides Himself is simply, we are told, light unapproachable.

III. All minds, it must be admitted, have not passed through the same discipline, nor can build their hopes on the same foundation. To some one truth has proved more precious than another—more full of light, or strength or comfort. Saul might feel safe in the battle in his armour of proof, David, when trusting to nothing better than his shepherd's sling and stone. But any truth that is held as truth, is a help towards attaining further truth. It is the posture of the will before the Divine message that is the condition of knowing the doctrine. The temper in which we believe is much more important than the greater or less articulation of our creed. A stout ship, ere now, has outridden the wildest gale on a single cable. It is a *dragging* anchor—an unstable mind—that tells of the coming wreck of faith.

BISHOP FRASER, *University Sermons*, p. 29.

REFERENCES: iii. 16.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xiii., No. 786; vol. xviii., No. 1087; *Ibid.*, *Evening by Evening*, p. 156; *Expositor*, 1st series, vol. ix., p. 382; H. P. Liddon, *Christmastide Sermons*, p. 107; *Ibid.*, *Church Sermons*, vol. i., p. 97; C. Kingsley, *National Sermons*, p. 257; *Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. ii., p. 86; J. H. Hitchens, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvii., p. 68; J. Kennedy, *Ibid.*, vol. xxi., p. 57; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vi., p. 376; *Homiletic Quarterly*,

vol. iii., p. 275; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 86. iv. 1-5.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. iii., p. 142. iv. 6-16.—*Ibid.*, p. 224; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 65; R. W. Dale, *Ibid.*, vol. vi., p. 289.

Chap. iv., ver. 7.—"Exercise thyself unto godliness."

I. THE word godliness signifies a religious character in all its integrity, with special reference to God: it is therefore the highest idea to which your aspiration can be raised. It is not simply salvation from sin, or holiness as separation from evil, but the result into which both flow. It is religion known by its highest possible name. And this piety, thus clothed with its perfection, you are bidden to seek as the business of your life: as the goal of all other aspirations. There is not in the Bible a more impressive and stimulating appeal to your own individual energy. The words assume it as the universal law of the supernatural order that one condition of our spiritual well-being, indeed of our spiritual life, is our own sedulous self-discipline. There is much music in the air that is not played to this note. There is a danger of our resting on Jesus and casting all our care on Him, in a sense for which He gives no authority.

II. *Exercise* thyself unto godliness. With regard to all the exercises of a holy life, whether the training of the soul to overcome sin, or its education to habits of deep devotion, ever more remember that the aim must be godliness, and nothing but that. Here is the protection of all religious discipline against the abuse to which it is liable. For instance, if your end is likeness to God, to God as revealed in His all-holy Son, you will never rest in the means. You will not mistake the aids and helps of religion for religion itself; you will for ever be freeing your way through them to Him who is the end. And if the whole soul is set on genuine godliness, no failure will divert its pursuit from that. The very sincerity of its desire will shield it from despair.

W. B. POPE, *Sermons and Charges*, p. 314.

REFERENCE: iv. 7.—R. G. Gould, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xii., p. 228.

Chap. iv., ver. 8.—"For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

THE Right Human Life is its own Reward.

I. The life which we have received from nature, beyond a very brief stage, is impracticable: it will not hold together.

One and one only human life can hold its own and renew itself for ever. Therefore, clearly, it is the only wise life, the only profitable life. All your real interests for time and all your real interests for eternity, you may stake on the life that recognises God for its source and law. It is as reliable as God's own existence. It will repay all your training, unfolding and unfolding for ever into higher and higher forms of humanity. Your strength and labour spent on any other human life will be lost and your time wasted.

II. The Highest, the Eternal, is capable of human development. More, God, who is the infinite Love and Reason, and Law and Power, seeks to unfold Himself in man. More, He can only reveal Himself to men and women, as He unfolds His powers *in* them. He has revealed Himself, He is now revealing Himself, and He will be for ever revealing Himself to humanity. Whether in the heavens, or on the earth, humanity is the throne and the kingdom of His manifestation.

III. Godliness is not gloom, nor asceticism. It makes no man a monk, no woman a nun. To enjoy *with God*, all that God has created, is godliness. Godliness despises no good thing, no beautiful thing, but rather freely receives all good things in thanksgiving and turns them into gladness. In the enjoyment of this world's blessings, cherish the confidence that they are shadows, and only shadows, of richer blessings—the perfectly human blessings and delights of our Father's Home-kingdom.

J. PULSFORD, *Our Deathless Hope*, p. 115.

THE Twofold Promise.

Paul's words are often quoted as if he meant that through godliness we might make our fortune here and hereafter, and as if a skilful Christian man might find life a sort of palatable soup, pleasant to the hungry and even to the dainty, by the due mixture of earthly and heavenly ingredients. The wages Christ earned of a wicked world were paid Him in full at Calvary. He entered into glory afterwards. His disciples, indeed, carried a wallet which was never without generous alms; and so godliness paid its way, as it always will do, but that way led it by the Cross. And so Christians may find that godliness is profitable for a livelihood and little more: a little more here, and much more hereafter. Here, a livelihood and afflictions; hereafter, rest and Divine riches; and so godliness with contentment is great gain.

I. We were born to advance and increase; and, therefore, to seek a higher place and a broader field may be, not only natural

but godly. But God, who is highest of all, and in whom there can be no ambition, when He comes down to commence an ascending career, carries upward the world of sinners and sufferers in His own progress. As He rises, we rise. If, then, we set our affections on things above, they must be things where Christ is, not where Satan is.

II. The promise of godliness for the life to come is rest, satisfaction with God in that rest, and enjoyment of the results of our labour in that satisfaction. Rest is a sweet and necessary thing: so necessary that without a day of rest our days of work would be unendurable: so sweet, that it is the first thought of the wearied earthly traveller that he will find it at the end of his journey. In the heavenly Canaan, the land of promise, we shall be rich and happy. Yes, but we shall find rest. Two things must have our care in exercising ourselves unto godliness; and these will be one sure test of our advancing proficiency—(1) We must pray; (2) we must revise our estimate of things temporal that are things desirable; (3) our proficiency will be shown in the ready, unprompted movement of our mind towards God in times of common or special activity.

T. T. LYNCH, *Three Months' Ministry*, p. 25.

THE Promise of Godliness for the Present Life.

The Apostle meant by godliness life under God's direct personal guidance, inspired by love to God, led in obedience to God and in personal communion with God. The Apostle means, further, to say, that to such a life God promises good and profitable things, not only in heaven, but here upon earth. That godliness has its possibilities of joy, of usefulness, of attainment, of victory, of knowledge, of social good, of spiritual stature, in this world as well as in the heavenly world.

I. And it seems to me that this must be true from the nature of the case. For if godliness consists in being loyally under God's administration, then it follows, of course, that a godly man is under that administration no less on earth than in heaven. A sovereign whose kingdom embraces mountain ranges and valleys, does not impose one law on the mountaineers and another on the men of the plains. The administration is one, and the loyal subject at the foot of the hills shares its privileges with the mountaineer. Conditions are different, but the king is the same, the law is the same; and whatever privileges of that administration are possible to the dweller in any part of it, are freely his.

II. I wonder if we all realise how much the Bible has to say about this life as compared with the next. Whatever the Bible may be, it is pre-eminently something to live by here. The more the significance that attaches to the future life, the stronger is the reason for giving us a manual for this life. Christ brings life to light by bringing immortality to light. Instead of turning away our thoughts from earth to heaven, He makes earth lighter and earthly life more significant with the light of heaven. There is too strong a tendency to make escape rather than victory the keynote of life. But the kingdoms of the world are promised to Christ. Sin is mighty, but Christ is mightier. God did not make this world to lose it. He did not make you and me to be dwarfs in holiness and weaklings in holy effort.

M. R. VINCENT, *The Covenant of Peace*, p. 33.

REFERENCES: iv. 8.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xvi., Nos. 937, 946; G. E. L. Cotton, *Sermons to English Congregations in India*, p. 66; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 99; *Ibid.*, *Plymouth Pulpit Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 355; J. Pulsford, *Our Deathless Hope*, p. 115; J. Tinling, *Ibid.*, p. 338; *Ibid.*, vol. iv., p. 104; A. J. Griffith, *Ibid.*, vol. xv., p. 348; H. P. Liddon, *Ibid.*, vol. xx., p. 353; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. v., p. 27; vol. x., p. 84.

Chap. iv., ver. 10.—"We trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe."

I. WHETHER we take the words, "the living God," in our text to apply to Christ Himself, or to the Father acting by Christ, it is equally asserted that Christ is the Saviour of all men, that the salvation which He wrought is, in and of itself, co-extensive with the race of man. What He did, He did for, or in the stead of, all men. Christ, being the Divine Son of God, and having become the Son of man, was no longer an individual man, bounded by the narrow lines and limits of His own personality, but was and is God manifest in the flesh: a sound and righteous Head of our whole nature, just as Adam was its first and sinful head. Hence it is that, whatever He does, has so large a significance. Hence that, when He fulfils the law, His righteousness is accepted as ours. From the vicarious work and sacrifice of the Redeemer, consequences not only possible, but actual, flow forth to every member of our common race, in virtue of that common membership, in virtue of their physical union with Christ in their common humanity. Whether these consequences will be to them an advantage or a disadvantage, a gain or a loss, must, from the very constitution of our

nature, both physical and spiritual, depend on further considerations, involving the exercise of their own spiritual faculties and capacities. "Christ is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe."

II. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." He is the Saviour of all men, in that He included them all in that nature which He took on Him, and bore the whole world's sin, and made a way for all to God. He is specially the Saviour of them that believe, in that in their case only does this His salvation become actual and come to its ripeness and perfection; in them only does His Spirit dwell; they only are changed into His image; they only shall be with Him and behold His glory where He is and be perfectly like Him, seeing Him as He is.

H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. vi., p. 108.

REFERENCES: iv. 10.—R. W. Dale, *Discourses on Special Occasions*, p. 121; W. C. E. Newbolt, *Counsels of Faith and Practice*, p. 88; J. T. Stannard, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 136. iv. 12.—J. Thain Davidson, *Sure to Succeed*, p. 207; R. Tuck, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 224; *Ibid.*, vol. xxxii., p. 18. iv. 13.—C. Babington, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 20; W. G. Horder, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxi., p. 107.

Chap. iv., ver. 16.—**"Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."**

SELF-DISCIPLINE.

I. What, as regards man, guilty man, is the final cause of the atoning Cross, the red altar of the all-blessed substitute of the sinner? It is the creation, in the penitent who embraces that one hope set before him, of a character in harmony with that God, equally absolute in grace and in "severity," who spared not His own Son. I do not say that this is the immediate purpose of the Cross, as set out in Scripture. No, it has first to effect, not transfiguration of character, but acceptance of person. It has to effect the objective reality of a righteous pardon. But that sacred pardon, or call it rather acceptance, a nobler word, is all the while a means and not an end. Its end, as far as the justified are concerned, is the transfiguration of character. The millstone of condemnation is lifted away, on purpose, above all things, that the penitent may be made effectually willing, with a will disengaged from the fears and the repulsions of the unpardoned state, to be trained into a character in harmony with God and capable of His heavenly presence.

II. We inhabit a period full of subtle tendencies to self-indulgence. I mean the moral self-indulgence which, in plain words, abhors not evil; the temper that can tolerate what ought to be intolerable to the conscience, even if it be some elaborate romance of sin, if only it comes in a garb that commends it to the intellect and the imagination. Too often the soul that has grasped personal justification yet forgets to grasp what should be its direct result; no negligent repose in sacred privileges, but the real and glorious work of the will in the strength of the peace of God. The assured and gladdened disciple too often needs to be reminded that his liberty is the liberty to observe, and love and do every detail of his Redeemer's will; that in his happy faith he is to find the nerves of his unwearied virtue; that from his whole plan of life down to its *minutiæ* of daily personal habits, public, private, and solitary, aye, down to his sleep, his table, and his dress, he must habituate himself to the moral and spiritual consciousness of being under discipline. For he is being trained under his Lord's grace and guidance, into the *character* of the Gospel.

H. C. G. MOULE, *Christ is All*, p. 175.

THE Teacher and the Taught (Sermon to Sunday School Teachers).

I. You are workmen of God. The great Worker has called you to His counsels, and He has assigned to you a task. Much of His purpose and government, of His mercy and judgment, proceeds in utter independence of all human aid or co-operation; but there is a larger portion of His blessedness which He only communicates to men through the human mind and heart. God waits and asks for the co-operation of His children, and finds for every kind of talent, intellect, and moral energy, some work to do. In one sense, indeed, every atom of every world is busily at work for God; and in one sense, every mind has a work to do for God, consciously or unconsciously, which no other mind can accomplish. Surely the highest dignity God could confer on any human being is to use Him for a purpose and work like this.

II. You are students of God's Word. If you are not students, if you are not doing your best to understand God's truth, you will soon exhaust your stock of capital, you will be perpetually baffled when you need not be, by the inquiries of the youngest children; you will not be thoroughly furnished for this great work. If Timothy needed to give himself to reading, exhorta-

tion, doctrine, it is equally necessary that you should devote yourselves to the study of revealed truth within your reach, and commune with the Spirit of its Author.

III. You are servants of the Church. One great function of the Church is to teach the world. It may be the function of some to exhort, of some to console. There are some in the Church whose great work seems to be to *rule*; the work of others is to give. The teaching office of the Church is not and cannot be confined to the pastorate. The Church should regard the school as a portion of its own operations, and the teachers as its own servants or representatives.

IV. Once more, you are watchers for souls. It is a wise and wonderful thing to save souls, to win souls. Are you habitually aware of the grand dimensions of your work? Do you never slip into routine? Are you always alive to its magnitude? Take heed to your doctrine that it be (1) scriptural, (2) comprehensive, (3) connected and ordered upon some plan, (4) appropriate to the class of minds with which you have to deal. "Take heed to thyself." Thou art not only to be free from the blame of others, and from the accusations of thine own conscience, but to be a pattern of purity and honour, of spirit and love, of word and conversation. Thou art to be a specimen of what a Christian ought to be, in the transactions of daily life, at the innermost shrine of earthly affections, on the highways of the world. A pattern to believers. Ordinary believers naturally look to those who teach for the deepest faith and for the highest kind of life. Patient perseverance in such godlike work is a way not only of securing the salvation of others, but our own salvation too. This taking heed to ourselves is, indeed, necessary, in order that we should have any influence with those that hear us. This taking heed to the doctrine is utterly indispensable to our own salvation. Let us continue in them, and remember that when we thus seek the salvation of others, we are seeking our own.

H. R. Reynolds, *Notes of the Christian Life*, p. 311.

The Comparative Influence of Character and Doctrine.

As a means of moral and religious influence, life should precede doctrine, character be regarded as of even greater importance than verbal teaching. We may perceive this by reflecting—

I. That life tends very greatly to modify a man's own views of doctrine.

II. It affects also his power of expressing or communicating truth to others.

III. It has in many respects an influence which direct teaching or doctrine cannot exert. Actions are (1) more intelligible, (2) more convincing than words, and (3) they are available in many cases in which the teaching of the lips cannot, or ought not, to be attempted.

J. CAIRD, *Sermons*, p. 301.

REFERENCES: iv. 16.—W. Elmslie, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxiv., p. 305; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 257.

THE Life to Come.

Consider—

I. The certainty of the life to come. I admit that our storehouse of proofs is here, in the revelation of God. It is here that life and immortality have been disclosed by the Great Teacher, who came down from heaven, and not only disclosed in His instructions, but set in a most vivid light, by the miracles He wrought, in bringing men back from the grave, and by His own resurrection, the type and pledge of the resurrection of the race. The teaching of the Bible accords with the workings of the human mind, with the analogies of things, as we see them around us, and with the general constitution of nature.

II. What are the characteristics of the life to come? The future is to be but the full development, in different circumstances, and in a different form of life, of the present. The symbols used in the Scriptures, and the analogies they adopt to illustrate and throw light upon the subject, all show that the life which is, is to give shape and form and impart its elements to the life which is to come.

III. While we shall be the same beings, as far as our moral consciousness is concerned, the materials of thought, the objects which shall excite the passions and determine the experience shall be the same. The present is the great storehouse of the future, wherein we are laying up the elements of our future experience. Our emotions in the life to come, whether present or prospective, shall exist in view of the past. He that is holy shall be holy still; and he that is filthy shall be filthy still; rising in holiness or sinking in degradation for ever.

E. MASON, *A Pastor's Legacy*, p. 186.

REFERENCE: v. 1-16.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. iii., p. 380.

Chap. v., ver. 4.—"But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to show piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God."

PIETY at Home.

I. The home must be safe. It must be a sanctuary, where there is nothing to hurt or destroy. It is a great and life-long benefit when life's outset is passed in an atmosphere of truth and openness, and nothing is more disastrous than that system of false threatening and coercion which makes its little victims both incredulous and superstitious, both cowardly and cunning. Be yourself fair, candid, evenly-minded, making it easy to others to tell the truth, listening to both sides of the story, and careful to judge righteous judgment. And keep out all that has the opposite tendency.

II. Make home attractive. The Australian bower-bird has its playing-place, a curious tunnel of twigs adorned with shells and pebbles and glittering potsherds, through which it has unwearied delight with its companions in whisking to and fro. And man himself is a bower-bird; merry movement, gay music, light objects; every child has the love of them—every home should be full of them. He is the good God who gives the gaiety, and he would be a gloomy demon who would drive it away.

III. Make home instructive. Be yourself intelligent; to surrounding minds a kindly, high-toned presence gives something they can grasp and which keeps them from cleaving to the dust.

IV. Make the home a preparation for life, and also a preparation for heaven. The only commodity which we can count on carrying through life is character; and by character we mean all those elements which enter into our moral and spiritual composition—faith in God, reverence, submission to His will, love to Christ, a sweet and gracious disposition, practical beneficence, a readiness for praise and thanksgiving. Keep the home near heaven. Let it face towards the Father's house.

J. HAMILTON, *Works*, vol. vi., p. 503.

REFERENCES: v. 4.—G. D. Macgregor, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 198; E. W. Shalders, *Ibid.*, vol. xiii., p. 157; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. xi., p. 277. v. 6.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 208; Forsyth and Hamilton, *Pulpit Parables*, p. 137. v. 8.—J. H. Thom, *Laws of Life*, 2nd series, p. 210. v. 10.—J. T. Stannard, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 154. v. 17-25.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. iv., p. 47; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxii., p. 186. v. 22.—E. Cooper, *Practical Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 198.

Chap. v., ver. 24.—"Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after."

THE Sins that follow Us.

The visible Church holds still within its outward pale thousands whose lives are their own condemnation. These are they whose sins are "open beforehand"; they need no penetrating scrutiny, no process of conviction. Their sins go before to judgment, sent forward to prepare a place on the left hand of the Judge in that great day. "And some men they follow after." That is to say, there are men all fair without, but within full of disguised and deadly evil. Let us see what the words mean.

I. They mean that all sins have their proper chastisement; which, however long delayed and seemingly averted, will as a general law, sooner or later, overtake the sinner. I say *all* sins, because chastisement follows often even upon sins that are repented of, as in the case of David; and I say also as a *general* law, because it seems sometimes that God, in His tender compassion to individual cases, does hold back the chastisement of His rod, and by ways of peculiar loving-kindness make perfect the humiliation of particular penitents. Our sins follow us by the rod of chastisement.

II. Again, past sins follow after sinners in the active power by which they still keep a hold on their present state of heart. It is one of the worst effects of sin, that after commission, it clings to the soul. Every sin leaves some deposit in the spiritual nature. It quickens the original root of evil; it multiplies and unfolds its manifold corruption. And, worst of all, it brings on a deadness and insensibility of the spiritual nature. Our present falls, infirmities, spiritual struggles, afflictions, and dangerous inclinations, are, for the most part, the sins of our past life, following us in chastisement, and cleaving as diseases and temptations.

III. And further, whether or no sins follow in chastisement now, they will surely overtake us in the judgment. The long quest of sin pursuing the guilty shall be ended before the great white throne. All masks shall be torn off from all faces there, and we shall be seen, not as we show ourselves, but as we are. It will be a fearful meeting between a sinner and his very self, when his true self shall confront his false, and the multitude of his sins shall clamour on every side. Such must some day be the doom of the most successful hypocrite, of the fairest and least suspected sinner. H. E. MANNING, *Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 73.

REFERENCES: v. 24.—T. T. Munger, *The Freedom of Faith*, p. 317,

J. Vaughan, *Fifty Sermons*, 1874, p. 109; J. Baines, *Sermons*, p. 15; *Homilist*, vol. vi., p. 115. vi. 1-21.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. iv., p. 191. vi. 4, 5.—*Homilist*, vol. vi., p. 1. vi. 6-13.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. x., p. 321. vi. 7.—A. F. Joscelyne, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 323; O. Morris, *Ibid.*, vol. xxviii., p. 132. vi. 7, 8.—*Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. v., p. 38. vi. 9.—A. Davies, *Ibid.*, vol. xiii., p. 245 vi. 9, 10.—H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, vol. xxvi., p. 227; *Plain Sermons*, vol. x., p. 195. vi. 11-16.—E. White, *Ibid.*, vol. xxxiii., pp. 113, 129.

Chap. vi., ver. 12.—"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life."

THE Apostle's Exhortation with Regard to Eternal Life.

There is a deep and solemn interest which always attaches to the last words of a fellow-creature; more especially is this the case if he who is departing out of life has long been eminent for his piety and devotion. The words of the text were spoken when St. Paul knew that his departure was at hand. Addressing his beloved Timothy, with a full realisation of all the trials of the past, and having the anticipation of his approaching martyrdom, with his dying breath he counsels Timothy, "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life."

I. Note the object here presented, "eternal life." Eternal life is an expression used in God's Word to denote the happiness and the glory of heaven. We are not to limit the meaning of this expression to the one idea of never-ending duration. On the contrary, eternal life is a term used to denote all the happiness, all the glory, all the dignity which God can confer on a redeemed creature in eternity. All that you can conceive of heavenly blessedness, all that Scripture sets forth to us of the happiness reserved for the saints in the life to come,—all is comprehended and included within this brief, comprehensive phrase, eternal life. Of that eternal life we know comparatively little as to its real nature. The happiness of heaven is for the most part in God's Word set forth to us either negatively, or by the help of imagery, borrowed from earthly things. I observe (1) that eternal life will comprehend the perfect knowledge of God. We have the authority of our Lord Himself for saying this. "This is eternal life to know Thee the only God." (2) Eternal life means perfected resemblance to Christ. In proportion as the Gospel of Christ gains its legitimate hold upon any man, in that degree he is brought into the Saviour's image. (3) Eternal life will consist in the companionship with all the blessed, with all the saints of God from Abel, the first martyr, down to the

saints that shall be brought forth to complete the spiritual edifice.

II. Note the exhortation with regard to eternal life, "lay hold upon it." This is an exhortation which summons to present, to immediate effort. How are we to lay hold on eternal life? I reply at once, Believe on the Son of God, trust in His power, confide in His love, rely on His wisdom, seek to partake of His grace. So shall you lay hold on eternal life. (2) Next, I would say, Cherish the influences of the Holy Spirit, cherish them by secret prayer; cherish them by holy meditation; cherish them by constant study of the Inspired Word; cherish them in the use of all the appointed means of grace. (3) And lastly, I would say, Would you lay hold on eternal life? Live for eternity. Propose to yourself as the great object for which you are sent into this world, to win the prize of everlasting life.

BISHOP BICKERSTETH, *Penny Pulpit*, new series, No. 54.

Chap. vi., ver. 12.—"Lay hold on eternal life."

MAN'S Great Duty.

I. Consider our need of eternal life. Sin has brought death into this world; and we are all of us involved in the calamity and buried in the ruins of the fall. We may not have sinned as others have done: that is very possible. But though we have sinned less than others, we cannot be saved by merit; even as, thank God, though we have sinned more than others we may be saved by mercy. Those who speak of great and little, of few and many sins, seem to forget that man's ruin was the work of one moment and of one sin. The weight of only one sin sank this great world into perdition; and now all of us, all men, lie under the same sentence of condemnation. Extinguishing every hope of salvation through works, and sounding as ominous of evil in men's ears as the cracking of ice beneath our feet, or the roar of an avalanche, or the grating of a keel on the sunken reef, or the hammer that wakens the felon from dreams of life and liberty, that sentence is this: "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them."

II. Consider what we have to do to obtain eternal life. Nothing in one sense more difficult, yet in another, easier—a wish, a word, a look, and it is ours. You have only to wish, and, as if struck by a magician's rod, the walls of your prison-house open. You are free.

III. Consider more particularly what we have to do to obtain

eternal life. By the aid of the Spirit, and through the exercise of faith, you are to lay hold on the Saviour; and laying hold on Him, though it were in the hour of the most imminent destruction, and in the very jaws of death, you lay hold of life—of eternal life.

IV. Consider when we are to lay hold of eternal life. When, but now? Christ promises it to-day; not to-morrow. Accept it so long as it is in your offer; seize it so long as it is within your reach.

T. GUTHRIE, *The Way to Life*, p. 1.

REFERENCES: vi. 12.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. i., p. 90; vol. ix., p. 45; *Clerical Library: Outline Sermons for Children*, p. 256, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 295; G. W. Conder, *Ibid.*, vol. vii., p. 280; H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, vol. xii., p. 184. vi. 14. 15.—F. W. Farrar, *Ibid.*, vol. xxviii., p. 67. vi. 15, 16.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. x., p. 216. vi. 16.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol xi., p. 123; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 336; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. v., p. 383.

Chap. vi., ver. 17.—"Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy."

HUMAN Affection raised, not destroyed, by the Gospel.

I. The Apostle sets before us, in the text, two applications of the same human affection. He bids us not to trust in uncertain riches, but to trust in the living God. He assumes that there is in the heart of man the tendency to dependence upon something beyond itself, yet intimately connected with itself; and above all, upon that wealth, which is the pledge and representative of all earthly enjoyment, and which is thus the great mediator between the heart and the world that attracts it. He assumes that this trusting impulse exists, and He would not destroy but reform it. He would exhibit the true and eternal object for a tendency in itself indestructible; and would intimate that there is prepared for the just desires of the soul a sphere of being, adequate to these desires, and from which the present detains us only as the counterfeit and mockery of it. On the one hand, "uncertain riches"; on the other, the parallel announcement, that "God giveth us richly all things to enjoy."

II. Trust not in uncertain riches, but trust in the living God. Preserve unbroken every element of your affections; they are all alike the property of Heaven. Be ambitious, but ambitious of the eternal heritage. Let avarice be yours, but avarice of celestial treasures. Covet esteem, but esteem in the mind of God, of the circles of the blessed. Yearn after sympathy, but seek it where

alone it is unfailing, in Him whose essence from eternity is love, and who became man that He might humanise that awfulness of celestial love to the tenderness of a brother's. "Charge them that are rich in this world" that they interpose not a veil between themselves and the Father of their spirits, or suffer the clouds and vapours of earth to sully or eclipse the beams of this eternal sun.

III. Our earthly objects of pursuit are themselves clad by hope with colours that rightfully belong only to their celestial rivals; our ordinary earthly longings themselves strain after a really heavenly happiness, while they miss so miserably the way to reach it. The votary of earthly wealth does, in fact, with all the energies of his nature, strain after that very security of unchangeable bliss which we preach; but, mistaking the illusory phantom, weds his whole soul to the fictitious heaven, which the powers of evil have clothed in colours stolen from the skies. The soul made for heaven is lost among heaven's shadows upon earth; it feigns the heaven it cannot find, and casts around the miserable companions of its exile, the attributes that belong to the God it was born to adore. Lay not out your rich capital of faith and hope and love and admiration, upon the poor precarious investments the world at best can offer you; impress upon your heart the conviction that not one of all this host of energies but was primarily designed for heaven to open the full tide of your affections to that world where alone they can find repose.

W. ARCHER BUTLER, *Sermons*, p. 270.

REFERENCES: vi. 17.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 137. vi. 18.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xiii., p. 244. vi. 19.—G. S Barrett, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxv., p. 179; Smart, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 105. vi. 20.—*Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xx., p. 49.

II. TIMOTHY.

REFERENCES: i. 1-5.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xi., p. 277. i. 1-6.—J. Wells, *Bible Children*, p. 237. i. 1-13.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. x., p. 195.

Chap. i., ver. 5.—"When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also."

THE Moral Quality of Faith.

It is not often that the old reformer, preparing to quit the scene of his labours, bequeaths to his young successor such parting counsels as those of Paul to Timothy. The usual product of experience, especially of an experience gained in attempting a great moral revolution, is a certain caution and lowering of hope; and when, looking back upon the past, the spent enthusiast measures the smallness of his achievements, by the splendour of his early projects, he is tempted to regret the magnitude of his aims, and to advise for the future a zeal too temperate to live through the frosts of circumstances. Towards the end of life the precepts which flow naturally from our lips express themselves in negatives. It was otherwise with Paul. Would that every leader's voice could burst, as he falls, into such a trumpet-sound, thrilling the young hearts that pant in the good fight, and must never despair of victory!

II. The secret of the deep affection between the aged Apostle and the young disciple is to be found in a quality common to them both—that energy of faith which from its wondrous conquests over our lower nature, is by many regarded as supernatural. Faith is the natural hypothesis of a pure and good heart, whence it looks on the face of nature and of life, and deciphers and welcomes their Divine lineaments. There is a certain temper, often usurping the name of charity, which springs, not from faith, but from the utter want of it: an easy laxity, a good-natured indulgence towards the sinfulness of men, arising from mere dim-sightedness as to its reality; a smiling complacency

to which character is indifferent, provided enjoyment and good-fellowship are unimpeded. The true charity is not that which thinks lightly of evil, but that which is slow to believe in it.

III. The germ of this moral defect of faith lurks in us all, and puts forth its tendency at least in transient moods, when the vision is dim, and the heart is low. In flat and heavy hours the tones of conscience are so muffled that by not esteeming we can miss them, and can say of the Holy Spirit, "It is nought." It is strange and sad how small and brief a darkness may quench for us an everlasting sun. It is an offence, not less against the calmness of reason, than the constancy of love, to be thus haunted by the visions of an untrustful mind, and like some poor sleep-walker, be led by ghosts of fear over marsh and moor till the home of rest be lost. Be it ours, in all things human and Divine, to keep the good hearts of faith; and as we accept the clearness of a brother's face, and the simplicity of his word, and the freedom of his affection, so we think ourselves open to the expression of God's life and love, in the beauty of the world, in the law of conscience, in the ample range of thought and aspiration, and in the promises already pressing for fulfilment, of saints and prophets.

J. MARTINEAU, *Hours of Thought*, vol. i., p. 86.

REFERENCES: i. 6.—A. Raleigh, *The Way to the City*, p. 138; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xviii., No. 1080. i. 6, 7.—G. Calthrop, *Words to my Friends*, p. 254. i. 7.—*Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. i., p. 310. i. 7-12.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 211. i. 8.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vii., p. 343. i. 9.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xii., No. 703; *Ibid.*, *Evening by Evening*, p. 164; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. vi., p. 333. i. 9-10.—G. E. L. Cotton, *Sermons to English Congregations in India*, p. 229.

Chap. i., ver. 10.—"But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel."

IMMORTALITY.

I. Christ hath revealed the fact of immortality. Not that it was utterly unknown before. The Psalms contain it and other passages of the Old Testament; and partly the outgrowth of instincts deep buried in the hearts of men, and partly the results of early and ill-remembered revelations,—even those who had not the Bible, for the most part expected a life beyond the grave. But Christ and the Christian revelation have made an end of the matter. And Christ Himself laid down His life, and continued under the power of death for a time; but again He

took up the life which He had so freely laid down, and now that He is risen and become the first-fruits of them that sleep we have in Him a specimen of the resurrection, and a guarantee of His people's immortality.

II. The Gospel has shed all the light we have on the nature of the life beyond, the mode or manner of immortality. On some points it says little or nothing, but all that we do know is announced, or by fair induction inferred, from the Gospels, from the Book of Revelation, from the Epistles to Thessalonica and Corinth.

III. The Gospel has not only brought immortality to light, but has revealed the means of reaching it. Christ might have come from the Father's house, and gone back to it, and yet might have been the only one from this world who did so; for He is the only one who has been here who has the intrinsic right and power to go thither. But to His friends He has extended His own right, and their immortality He has identified with His own. "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life"; and if you know the Lord Jesus rightly; if through Him, the Way, you have come to a reconciled God; and if through Him, the Truth, God's quickening Spirit has come into your soul, you will possess life so plenteously as not to dread the second death; you will be able to look calmly at the grave, and all intervening incidents, strong in the strength of conscious immortality.

J. HAMILTON, *Works*, vol. vi., p. 365.

REFERENCES: i. 10.—T. Reed, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 365; J. Vaughan, *Fifty Sermons*, vol. x., p. 92; S. A. Tipple, *Echoes of Spoken Words*, p. 177; A. K. H. B., *Graver Thoughts of a Country Parson*, 3rd series, p. 230; E. Bersier, *Sermons*, 1st series, p. 181; *Good Words*, vol. vi., p. 722; T. M. Herbert, *Sketches of Sermons*, p. 184; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. vii., p. 266; J. B. Paton, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 52; W. Brock, *Ibid.*, vol. viii., p. 328; J. B. Brown, *Ibid.*, vol. xii., p. 305; E. Johnson, *Ibid*, vol. xiv., p. 200; Bishop Westcott, *Ibid.*, vol. xxxv., p. 310; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. vi., p. 220.

Chap. i., ver. 12.—**"I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day."**

I. THERE is about these words a sort of charm which eludes theological or critical analysis. They assert no historical fact. They can scarcely be said to affirm any moral principle; they establish not one single controversial doctrine. And yet, perhaps, there are hardly any words in the Bible more encouraging, more stimulating, more assuring, better worth remembering,

for the spirit which they breathe, and the holy example of courage and of confidence which they set vividly before our eyes and heart. They present to us the visible image of a man exemplifying all that he had ever taught. He was crucifying himself to everything that was adverse to his duty. He was counting all things but dross compared with the great restoration which he was expecting in eternity, the recovery of all that in time he had deposited with Christ. His entire spiritual fortune was invested in that one venture.

II. St. Paul differed from most of mankind, no doubt, not less in the personal circumstances than in the moral altitude of his position. But as respects the relation between himself and his duty, and the principles on which his duty to God and man must be discharged, St. Paul differed no more from ourselves than we differ from one another. It is impossible that we should resolutely, honestly look our duty in the face, and *do it*, without encountering in one or more of all the regions of suffering, those, namely, of mind, body, or estate, some cross, according to God's providence, of lighter or more oppressive magnitude. But it is in the path of duty and not in the path of artificial martyrdom, that these sufferings must be encountered. We must have engrafted our life on that of Christ. We must be endeavouring to live in His Spirit and according to His will. Then we may confidently cast our care upon Him, assured that He careth for us.

W. H. BROOKFIELD, *Sermons*, p. 36.

THE Assurance of Faith.

I. The Faith. (1) It consists of trust in Christ, reliance on Him for salvation according to the revelation of the Gospel. (2) According to the Apostle, the personal surrender and the commitment of himself and of all his interests into the hand of Christ is the prominent distinction of faith.

II. The Assurance. (1) Like the faith with which it is connected, it is enlightened and intelligent, acquired and realised in the knowledge of Christ, in the personal acquaintance with Christ. (2) Another element in the assurance of the text is a full persuasion of Christ's ability to guard and keep with all fidelity to the very last the deposit which has been entrusted to Him. By way of practical application, note (1) that both the faith and the assurance are personal. (2) They are alike of present exercise. (3) Both the one and the other are nothing without Christ Himself.

E. THOMSON, *Memorials of a Ministry*, p. 283.

CHRISTIAN Certainty.

It is refreshing in these days of hesitancy and doubt to hear such a note of certainty as rings in this avowal. It is a characteristic note of the New Testament writers. Their intellectual strength, their freedom from fanaticism cannot be questioned, and yet they are never doubtful about Christianity; their conviction is always distinct, strong, and imperturbable. Can we, from this avowal of the Apostle, gather any indications of the true grounds of Christian confidence?

I. Paul was now an old man—Paul the aged, as he designates himself—although probably he was not more than sixty-three when he was put to death. Few men had tested Christianity as he had done. (1) First, by the repeated investigations of a peculiarly keen intellect—in Damascus, in Arabia, and in Athens, and through thirty years of profound exposition and keen controversy. (2) Next by the sacrifice for it of possessions and prospects, the most attractive to an ardent, aspiring nature like his. (3) By endurances for it such as few undergo—stripes, imprisonment, deaths oft. And now he stands face to face with the last great test of fidelity to conviction; he is about to die for his beliefs. And throughout his letter there is not one dubious estimate, one faltering avowal. Not only is his Christian assurance confident, it exults, it vaunts itself. There is no mistaking the tone of this his final verdict upon Christianity. The very phraseology indicates the strength and the enthusiasm of his faith.

II. The Apostle does not rest his certainty upon an ethical basis and feeling of personal goodness. In Paul's theory of salvation by Christ, personal holiness never takes the place of a meritorious cause. It is simply the fruit and expression of Christ's great gift of life. Nor does Paul derive his certainty from any imaginative hopes of the eschatologist. Such confidence as he avows is clearly the product of intelligent testimony, of clear conviction, of long and diversified experience of Christian life. There can be no strong exulting certainty in mere peradventure. If immortal hope is to be assured to a man, his present life in Christ must be certain. "I know whom I have believed."

III. It comes then to this. The evidence upon which the Apostle relies is solely that of his personal experience of Christ. The certainty of an old saintly man like Paul—the certainty which is produced by a long Christian experience, that rests upon what Christ has been, in the manifold necessities of a

strenuous life, in its arduous duties, fierce temptations, sore conflicts, depressions and sorrows,—becomes an absolute feeling as indubitable as life itself. For the life in Christ day by day generates the measure of your dying confidence, the strength of your trust. If your realisation of Christ be meagre, your assurance will be of corresponding feebleness. But if your assurance of Christ be large and continued through long years of life, then your faith will grow exceedingly, your confidence will take large forms, your avowals will find large expressions.

H. ALLON, *The Indwelling Christ*, p. 143.

REFERENCES: i. 12.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. v., No. 271; vol. xvi., No. 908; J. M. Neale, *Sermons in a Religious House*, vol. i., p. 240; F. Greeves, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xviii., p. 129; J. Le Hurey, *Ibid.*, vol. xxxiv., p. 51; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 113; vol. v., p. 28; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 78. i. 12-14.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxxii., No. 1913.

Chap. i., ver. 13.—**"Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus."**

NOTE—

I. What the Apostle knew concerning Christ. The knowledge which he had of Christ, which inspires the confidence of which the text speaks, must have been knowledge relating either to the person or to the work of the Redeemer; and it may be worth while to consider for a few moments what it was the Apostle knew concerning the person of our blessed Lord, and what it was he knew concerning the office which the Redeemer came to discharge. Concerning the person of Christ, he knew that wonderful mystery, that in the person of Christ there were united the Divine and human natures. And more particularly he knew the omnipotent power which belonged to Christ. I speak of the power which belonged to Christ as Mediator, that power which God the Father conferred on Him in His capacity as Mediator, in order that it might be exercised for the welfare of His Church. The Apostle knew of this omnipotent power of Christ, and it was the knowledge which he had of that omnipotent power which inspired him with confidence in Christ, as able to discharge the trust which the Apostle had commended to his keeping. And he also knew of the infinite wisdom of the Redeemer. "In Him are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." All hearts are open to Him. From Him no thought can be concealed. But there is one other attribute belonging to the Saviour, which the Apostle must have known, and which contributed to strengthen his assurance in the Saviour, and that is the attribute of love and

sympathy. Hence, the knowledge which the Apostle had of the power, wisdom, and love of Christ, conspired to make him feel an unhesitating assurance in the ability of Christ. Note, secondly, what the Apostle knew concerning the office of Christ. Generally he knew that God the Father had appointed Christ to the office of man's Redeemer. The Saviour had voluntarily undertaken that office, and manifested a determination to do and to suffer all that was necessary in order to ensure the result for which the office was undertaken. As our Redeemer He had bought us with His own blood. As the Advocate of His people He identifies Himself with their cause.

II. Notice next how it was that the Apostle acquired this knowledge, which enabled him to speak, with so much sure certainty, respecting Christ; one was from the testimony of others, the other from his own experience. (1) From the testimony of others, the uniform testimony of all time, with regard to the mode of salvation, has been that Christ is the one and the only foundation for the sinner's hope for eternity. In every dispensation, the Patriarchal, the Legal or Levitical, as well as the Gospel—the way of salvation has been but one. Prophets and righteous men of old, types and predictions, and ceremonies, all pointed to the Saviour as the one hope of the sinner, the one refuge in whom men may be invited to find shelter from God's wrath on account of sin. (2) And yet there was a fuller and firmer ground of confidence than this. Call to mind what his course had been. Once he was the most active amongst the persecutors of Christianity. But now so rich had been his experience of the sympathy, the love, the grace, the power, the wisdom, of Jesus, that he was able to say, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that day."

BISHOP BICKERSTETH, *Penny Pulpit*, new series, No. 95.

REFERENCES: i. 13. *Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. ii., p. 197; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. ii., No. 79. i. 14.—J. G. Rogers, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 173. i. 18.—E. Cooper, *Practical Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 214. ii. 1.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 75; J. Thain Davidson, *Sure to Succeed*, p. 77; T. M. Herbert, *Sketches of Sermons*, p. 151. ii. 1-26.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. x., p. 291. ii. 2.—A. P. Stanley, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 200.

Chap. ii., ver. 3.—"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

TRUE Bravery.

I. Many a hero in ancient and modern times is glorified, and

many a conquered man is despised, when the so-called hero trusted to his strength of mind or body, and felt confident of escape or victory. This is not bravery. To feel sure that for you there is little or no danger, is not heroic. This was not St. Paul's bravery, when he was a day and a night in the deep, or though no sailor, thrice shipwrecked, and ready to face it all over and over again. He has told us nothing more of it than these words, "a day and a night in the deep." What a proof that is of bravery; it did not dwell in his mind enough to speak of.

II. Again, many will dare really dangerous things when numbers look on, and great praise and shouting thousands cheer them on to their work. This was not St. Paul's kind of bravery. For the sake of Christ he could take pleasure in infirmities, in weakness, in shame, and go from city to city, though beaten here, stoned there, imprisoned, attacked.

III. Christ's army has no room for cowards. Numbers do not hide them, they cannot hide undiscovered in the general wars. In Christ's army Christ requires every one to be brave, whilst He has declared, speaking from heaven, that "the fearful shall have their place in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone." It seems a fatally unexpected sentence at the first sight. But the servants of the Almighty King of Life ought to have some of the life strength of His almightiness in them. True bravery is of the Spirit; it is the life of Christ within the heart; and fears nothing within, or without, so long as the good cause is not betrayed, so long as truth is upheld. It is perfect self-mastery, unselfishly following Christ.

E. THRING, *Uppingham Sermons*, vol. i., p. 173.

CHRISTIAN Battles.

I. If you look at the text you will notice that the Apostle is putting before us a plain exhortation to conduct, based upon a distinct statement of position. The position he states to be this, "as a soldier"—the conduct, "endure hardness"; and when we come to examine into the necessity of such conduct, based upon the exigencies of such a position, we are thrown back upon the old thought of the enemy, with whom we have to contend; we have in fact to fight against the devil, the world, and the flesh. When we speak of fighting with Satan there is this always to be remembered, that the war has to be waged with one possessed of all the three chief faculties which go to make any malignant power oppressive to a struggling heart; for Satan is undoubtedly, possessed, first of all, of natural

capacity; secondly, of a wide-reaching science; and thirdly, of a large experience. I would remind you further that Satan, in his fight against us, is seconded by that power within us, which from its intimate connection with our animal organism, and the grovelling direction of all its tendencies, can best be epitomised in its character as "the flesh." If the flesh is a traitor who makes a concordat with Satan, "the world" is an enemy equally fierce and infinitely more subtle. "The world," in a word, we know, means this: the accumulated force of certain principles sin-born, and sin-strengthened, which tend to undermine the spiritual life.

II. The character of the enemy is marked by three features. (1) Craft or unworthy cunning. (2) Patient persistence in recurrent and well-timed attack. (3) A seductiveness in order to overcome suspicion or fear of evil. To disguise from ourselves the reality, or to minimise the strength of the forces opposed to us, lest we become careless and are confident of victory; or, what is equally dangerous, to lose sight of the certainty of recurrent assistance, and so yield to the seductions of evil from a craven fear of ultimate defeat is the utmost folly.

III. How are we to meet an enemy of so formidable a kind? St. Paul says, "As a soldier." How are we to act as soldiers? (1) By a life of faith. The illuminative power of faith, and also faith as a dominant faculty must rule. Faith inspires courage. (2) To act with simplicity. To be one's simple better self; and simplicity is part of the character of God. (3) With patience. Patience is love exerting itself to resistance. You must eventually win your way simply by standing your ground.

IV. If such be some of the features of the soldier's character, what does it all amount to? It amounts, I submit, in practice to precisely what the Apostle said, "enduring hardness"; not that you should be callous, but that such virtues should be exercised by you with unbending resolution, and that you should keep constantly before you the ever-recurring need of determinedly crushing pride and passion. God has Himself entered the arena, and we have also the encouragement of the brotherhood of Christians.

W. J. Knox Little, *Characteristics and Motives of the Christian Life*, p. 70.

Christianity: a Warfare.

If we are true Christians we are every one of us soldiers. If we really belong to Christ we are every one of us carrying on a daily warfare. The enemy is never out of our sight; the

contest is a life-long contest; the battle ground is our soul; the enemy whom we have to beat down is sin in its ten thousand varying forms; the struggle is often invisible to all but ourselves: alone we have to fight, alone we have to conquer, seen only, aided only, guided only (it may be) by our unseen Chieftain, our great and glorious Leader, who, seated high above the din and turmoil of the contest, watches all the efforts, and controls all the movements of His mighty host.

II. Our text gives us some very necessary, very useful advice on this topic. It bids us remember that it is not an easy thing to be a Christian: it bids us remember that to be a soldier of the Cross requires effort and self-denial and constant endurance. Thou therefore endure hardness," or, as it might be paraphrased, "Thou therefore take thy share of suffering, take thy portion of hardship, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

III. Our army has its great tradition. Through the exertions of the early warriors it is that we are possessed, as we are to-day, of all the blessings of the Gospel. To their courage, their zeal, and their love for souls, we owe the peace and the happiness which Christianity has brought to us. Let us thank God that He raised up these mighty warriors; let us thank God that they went forth as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, and conquered ignorance, conquered superstition, conquered sin. One last word. Do not let us forget that we belong to a victorious army. We are on the conquering side: those of us who love and serve Christ must prevail at last.

E. V. HALL, *The Waiting Saviour*, p. 37.

FORTITUDE.

There are many obvious reasons for cultivating a more robust and manly earnestness in our religion.

I. It is due to the character of the great Master whom we serve. "No man that warreth." It cannot be doubted that, in the vivid language of the Word of God, every Christian, without exception—man, woman, or child—is called to be a soldier, any more than it can be doubted that conflict, with all its ideas of danger and watchfulness and struggle, enters into the actual personal experience of us all. We look up to the Captain of our salvation, and every imaginable motive which can nerve the human heart combines to inspire us with dauntless courage and unflinching fortitude.

II. A robust earnestness is due to the necessities of the work. God takes every possible precaution in His Word that we should

count the cost before we enlist under our Captain's banner. We must conquer or be conquered—for there is no other alternative —live or die. And this endurance of hardship is the more necessary because, not only are habits of personal self-denial and self-restraint, watchful devotion and earnest effort, the conditions of victory, but they are actual parts of the victory themselves.

III. Manly vigour is due to the abundance of the reward. This motive is addressed to the Christian, not to the man of the world; to the converted, not to the unconverted. Salvation itself is not of reward, it is all of grace. It is free sovereign grace, out of the spontaneous love of God, that calls the soul. It is all of grace, not of works. But once let the soul find Christ, let it be accepted within the family circle, let it fairly take service beneath the banner of Christ as the faithful soldier and servant of a crucified Master, and then God deals with it by rewards.

E. GARBETT, *Experiences of the Inner Life*, p. 149.

FEARFULNESS under a Curse.

These are the words of St. Paul; they express his view of a good man's life and character. The Christian man is a soldier of Christ, and must be brave and enduring. The brave alone enter heaven; the fearful are cast into hell. Bravery, endurance, and victory, are not accidental or wonderful, not matters of chance, to be or not to be, but sober necessities of common life; and fearfulness is not a pardonable weakness, but a deadly sin; and like any other sin must be steadily fought against and overcome. Bravery is Christian, fearfulness is devilish. The good soldier of Christ, man or woman, is brave, and the temper of the Christian is bravery.

II. St. Paul was brave. When he saw the brethren, we are told he thanked God and took courage. The very words "took courage" show how lonely-hearted he must have felt before, as well he might feel; how in his spirit he longed for some human consolation, as he was about at last to see the city of palaces, the stronghold of earthly power, the fairest, grandest sight that eye could see of man's work, the foulest and most poisonous that sin triumphant had ever dwelt in. St. Paul coming up the long straight road, mile after mile, drawing nearer to so vast, so pitiless, so splendid a place, had his human feelings we may be sure; for, when he saw the brethren who had come out to meet him, he took courage. Well he knew the meaning of his own words

to his young and faithful friend: "Do thou, therefore, endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." A brave man's words they were, and a brave man's heart experiences the freshness of his free spirit, that knew nothing on the wide earth which could make him step back one foot when Christ had work to be done. The brave are of Christ, the doom of hell fire is on the fearful.

E. THRING, *Uppingham Sermons*, vol. i., p. 167.

ENDURING Hardness.

I. In the large social life of which we are all members these words come to us as a call to more service. The Church of Christ exists to serve. We do not exist for ourselves; we exist for others. We do not unite to get; we unite to give. We do not come together even for spiritual fellowship: we come together for practical work. Now the Church of Christ can never choose her work: her work is always given her in the providence of God. Each new age brings to her a new task, and surely never was the task more clear to the Church of Christ than it is to-day. The task of the Church is to restore the inspiration of the Christian faith, and to revive the beauty of Christian love.

II. In our outward public life these words come to us as a call to more sacrifice. If we are true followers of Jesus Christ, somewhere in our life the note must be telling of definite sacrifice. Christ's view of life is not an easy view; it is on the whole a severe view. It does not meanwhile admit of a full-orbed culture; it demands sacrifice. Fear not to make some sacrifice for Christ; pant not so eagerly to have your own ideas of life realised. Have faith in eternity, and meanwhile take bravely your share of the hardness.

III. These words come to us as a call to more strictness. We shrink from the hardship of watching strictly and sternly our inward personal life. When the inner life is not cared for, outward work—even God's work—may be done faithfully, but it has no effectiveness, no glow. Where the inner life is watched strictly and severely there comes over even the simplest life of outward work the spell that attracts, the beauty that wins.

R. S. SIMPSON, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xii., p. 358.

ENDURING Hardness as a Soldier.

The fact that we are Christian soldiers suggests three corresponding duties.

I. The will of the soldier should be wholly absorbed in that of his commander.

II. A soldier must possess true courage.
III. A soldier must be ready to endure hardness.

J. N. NORTON, *Golden Truths*, p. 411.

REFERENCES: ii. 3.—A. P. Stanley, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 198; *Ibid.*, vol. xiv., p. 364; J. Thain Davidson, *The City Youth*, p. 183; C. Garrett, *Loving Counsels*, p. 206; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xvi., No. 938; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 72; *Ibid.*, vol. viii., p. 163; S. Pearson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xx., p. 307; H. P. Liddon, *Ibid.*, vol. xxxv., p. 273. ii. 3-6.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 256. ii. 4-10.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 80. ii. 5.—W. Landels, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 395. ii. 8.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxviii., No. 1653; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 67; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vi., p. 376.

Chap. ii, ver. 9.—"But the Word of God is not bound."

THE Word of God here evidently means His Gospel; for the word Gospel occurs in the preceding verse as the subject about which the Apostle is speaking. And the intention of the Apostle in saying this here is to prevent Timothy from being discouraged by the fact that he, Paul, who had been so actively engaged in promoting the Gospel, who was so closely and entirely identified with it, that he, more than any other, represented it to the world, was now in prison on account of it. There were two ways in which this might discourage Timothy. (1) It was the loss to himself of his most powerful coadjutor in the work to which he had given himself, Paul being emphatically the champion of the Gospel, who had done more for its promotion than any other man. (2) There was the encouraging effect which this state of things was likely to have on opponents. In these circumstances Paul calls the attention of Timothy to the fact that the position and prospects of the truth itself were not to be judged by the position and prospects of its promoters.

I. The Gospel is not bound as regards any human necessity. It is prepared for every requirement of human wellbeing properly understood. In promoting the happiness of man it begins so very far down, and has so true an idea of what that happiness consists in, and such resources for removing all poisonous roots —all hindrances whatever, whether relative or moral—that it never comes to a standstill from want of power or want of adaptation, or from not possessing the particular thing which is required.

II. The Gospel is not "bound" by the purpose of God. The opposite of this is quite conceivable; for as everything turns on the will of God, it might so happen that God did not intend it to be offered to every one, so that all its adaptation and sufficiency

of merit and grace would go for nothing in so far as some were concerned. In that sense, and to that extent, it would be bound. It would not be a universal remedy for the universal disease. But this is very far from being the case. (1) It is not bound geographically. (2) It is not bound morally. The purpose of God does not say that there are certain classes of sinners so wicked that they do not deserve it, or certain other classes of sinners so comparatively good that they do not require it. It tells us that no one deserves it, and that every one requires it.

III. It is not bound by the Providence of God. The prisons of the saints have often been the scenes of the noblest deeds for Christ; and out of their darkness have come the most striking appeals which have ever thrilled the heart of humanity; not only investing with a new halo the truth which inspired God's servants, but showing that however they might be bound His Word was not bound, but rather from these very circumstances the more surely His, and the more certainly on its way to victory.

A. L. SIMPSON, *Sermons*, p. 94.

REFERENCES: ii. 9.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 216. ii. 10.—G. B. Johnson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 286; F. Ferguson, *Ibid.*, vol. xvi., p. 168. ii. 11.—G. Huntington, *Sermons for Holy Seasons*, p. 223; Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 301. ii. 12.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. x., No. 547; *Ibid.*, *Evening by Evening*, p. 186. ii. 13.—*Ibid.*, *Sermons*, vol. xxv., No. 1453; J. Vaughan, *Sermons*, 15th series, p 222. ii. 15.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxi., No. 1217. ii. 16.—J. H. Hitchens, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 328; T. T. Munger, *Ibid.*, vol. xxxiii., p. 88.

Chap. ii., ver. 19.—**"The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."**

I. THE whole of a man's peace, and all his security depend upon this: What is his foundation? It is the plainest of all plain Scriptural truths, that the only foundation of any soul's safety is the Lord Jesus Christ. By which is meant, that the groundwork of a man's salvation is the Saviour's love for his soul, and the work which the Saviour has begun and finished for him—that righteousness in which the Saviour clothes him; that intercession which the Saviour pleads for him, and that glory which the Saviour has prepared for him. Other foundations may have a momentary peace, but this only can support the superstructure for eternity.

II. Now this truth the Apostle carries a little into more detail. In order to do it, his mind borrows an image from a

ceremony common at the commencement of the erection of a public building, when a king, as he lays the foundation stone, sets upon it the impression of the royal seal. In like manner, as if to give to the believer's hope a twofold security, God is said not only to lay the foundation, but to seal it; and when He seals it, He seals it to Himself by the oath with which He confirms it, and to the believer by the spirit in which He gives it.

III. The seal is twofold. There are two fundamental principles which God has placed on it. The one stands out clear, legible and large. "The Lord knoweth them that are His"; and the other is like unto it—"Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." The seal must have been twice stamped; both inscriptions must have been there before the seal is safe, and stands quite sure. The two sides must never be divided. But as the stamp of God's love is laid, so must the stamp of man's obedience be laid. God's love first, to teach that there is no real obedience till there is first a sense of God's love.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 351.

THE Sealed Foundation.

I. The testimony or the declaration of the text. "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure," or, more literally, "the firm foundation of God standeth." Observe the force of the first word, "nevertheless." It obviously refers to the preceding verses, as if the Apostle had said, Whatever error or corruption may spring up, whatever power and influence enemies of the truth may acquire, and whatever defection or apostacy there may be among professing Christians, there is no good reason why Christ's servants should lose heart, or should relax in their prayers and efforts. "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure." (1) What are we to understand by the foundation of God? The whole scope of the verse obviously is to set forth the absolute safety of Christ's Church and people. The Lord Jesus Christ, in His glorious Person, offers atoning death, a finished work of redemption, as the one great foundation; but all who are built on Him by faith, are, in God's judgment, one with Him, one building, one body. (2) What is taught concerning this foundation? "It standeth sure." This is a plain inference from the fact that it is the foundation of God.

II. The Divine seal or confirmation of this testimony.

(1) We have, on the one side, a declaration of glorious privilege —"having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are His." The Lord knows all things, but in a peculiar and distinguishing sense He knows and marks His people as His own. But God has known His people, and set His love on them from eternity, for they are all elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father. (2) "And let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." It is here put in the form of a rule or precept, to teach us that the certainty of God's purpose never interferes with our moral responsibility, nor supersedes the obligation resting on His people, to strive and pray for entire holiness.

R. ELDER, *The Redeemer's Cry*, p. 91.

REFERENCES: ii. 19.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxxi., No. 1854; *Ibid.*, *Evening by Evening*, p. 174; R. S. Candlish, *Sermons*, p. 220; G. E. L. Cotton, *Sermons to English Congregations in India*, p. 157; Bishop Magee, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xxii., p. 1; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 201; *Ibid.*, vol. viii., p. 74; L. Abbott, *Ibid.*, vol. xxi., p. 113; *Ibid.*, vol. xxxvi., p. 74.

Chap. ii., ver. 20.—"In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour."

THE Church Visible and Invisible.

The sight of the united body of Christians has led us to speak of what are called the visible and the invisible Church, in what seems an unscriptural way. The word Church, applied to the body of Christians in this world, means but one thing in Scripture—a visible body invested with invisible privileges. Scripture does not speak of two bodies, one visible, and the other invisible, each with its own complement of members.

I. The Church of Christ, as Scripture teaches, is a visible body, invested with invisible privileges. Take the analogy of the human body by way of illustration. When the soul leaves the body, it ceases to be a body, it becomes a corpse. So the Church would cease to be the Church did the Holy Spirit leave it; and it does not exist at all except in the Spirit. Very various things are said of the Church; sometimes it is spoken of as glorious and holy, sometimes as abounding in offences and sins. It is natural, perhaps, at first sight, to invent, in consequence, the hypothesis of two Churches, as the Jews have dreamed of two Messiahs; but, I say, our Saviour has implied that it is unnecessary; that these opposite descriptions of it are not really incompatible; and, if so, what reason remains for doing violence to the sacred text?

II. Take (1) the objection that bad men are in the visible Church; what does it prove? Is a dead branch part or not part of a tree? You may decide this way or that, but you will never say, because the branch is dead, therefore the tree has no sap. It is a dead branch of a living tree, not a branch of a dead tree. In like manner, irreligious men are dead members of one visible Church, which is living and true, not members of a Church which is dead. Because they are dead it does not follow that the visible Church to which they belong is dead also. (2) Now to consider a second objection that is urged, viz., that "there are good men external to the visible Church, therefore there is a second Church called the invisible." In answer I observe, that as every one who has been duly baptised is, in one sense, in the Church, even though his sins since have hid God's countenance from him; so if a man has not been baptised, be he ever so correct and exemplary in his conduct, this does not prove that he has received regeneration, which is the peculiar and invisible gift of the Church. The essence of regeneration is the communication of a higher and Divine nature; and sinners may have this gift, though it would be a curse to them, not a blessing.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 220

Chap. ii., vers. 20, 21.

VESSELS of Gold and of Earth.

The "great house" is the external institution of the Church, the "vessels" are its members. Some of them are precious, and used for high purposes, some are cheap and common. A man can settle to which of the classes he belongs. If he belong to the one, honour, if he belong to the other, dishonour is his portion.

I. First of all note the two classes. There is gold and silver plate set out upon the high table where the lord of the house sits, or ranged in glittering rows upon some buffet or sideboard. There are pots and pans in the scullery fit only for base uses. And, says Paul, there is as much difference between different sets of people who are joined in the same Christian community, as between these two sets of vessels. Now, of course, we are not to suppose that the distinction which he here draws is the vulgar worldly one, according to natural gifts and capacities. Men put shining faculties and talents in high places, and lowly or moderate ones in the background. That is not the way in which God classifies vessels in His house. The difference points to a thing within our own power,

viz., the difference in maturity of Christian character, in fervour and earnestness of Christian devotion. It is this, and only this, and not the vulgar distinctions of temperament or capacity, which lie so little within our own power, that determines the hierarchy of excellence and the aristocracy and nobility in the Church of Christ. The graces of a Christian character are the gold and silver. The "earth" is the tendencies of the desires, or the selfishnness of our own nature.

II. Note, again, the possibility and the method of passing from the lower class to the higher. "If a man purify himself from these." The *these* there evidently means, not ones which the Apostle has been specifying, but the whole class of commoner and viler vessels of which he has been speaking. (1) The cleanness of a man's heart and life determines his place in the Christian Church. (2) It is a man's own business to make himself clean.

III. Note the characteristics of the more precious. The vessel unto honour is (1) sanctified. Consecration is indispensable if we are to be of any use to Jesus, or precious in His sight, (2) "meet for the Master's use," or, as it might perhaps be rendered even more accurately, simply "useful to the Master." You cannot make man-of-war's masts out of crooked sticks, and no man is meet for the Master's use except on condition of devotion and purity. (3) The last characteristic is that of readiness for all sorts of service. The figure of the cup is abandoned here. There should be many-sided alacrity. The calls to "good works" often come suddenly, and if we are not living with our loins girt, the opportunity may pass before we have pulled ourselves together.

IV. Note the honour to the vessel. The true honour is service. Reputation and other consequences of service are desirable, but nothing is greater, more ennobling and blessed, than the service itself. Can any of us have any higher honour than to be of use to Jesus Christ? The King's servants are made nobles by their service, as was the case of old in England.

A. MACLAREN, *The God of the Amen*, p. 198.

REFERENCE: ii. 20, 21.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxiii., No. 1348.

Chap. ii., ver. 21.—"If a man purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work."

A VESSEL unto Honour.

St. Paul is giving his dying counsels to his dear Timotheus;

dictating them, probably, to Luke, in the Roman dungeon, from which he was to be released only by his martyrdom. As ever, as in his earliest discourses and epistles, so here, while the topics are many, the topic is Christ; Christ in His personal and saving glory, and the relation of believing man to Him. On the verge of the eternal state he writes as practically as possible on the holy theme. He leaves behind him, not a rhapsody of farewell, but a grave, tender, last reminder to his beloved disciple how to believe aright in the unchangeable Saviour, and how to serve that Saviour's purposes day by day in trial and in duty. The man who has found Christ, and is found in Him, is not the man to be disturbed, certainly not the man to be bewildered in the prospect of death. He belongs already to both worlds, belonging to Him to whom they both belong. For him the things seen and temporal are just the present field of his Master's work, and the things unseen and eternal are but the extension of that vast field into another climate, but under the same owner and lighted by the same sun. So the dying Apostle is full of the thought of his younger fellow-labourer's continued labour. The Church visible is a great house, and every member of it, every one who is registered under the Christian name, is, in some sense, a vessel, a σκεῦος in it, and used for some purpose by the Master of it. But the qualities and uses of the vessels immensely vary; and there are those which are used only for purposes of dishonour; that is to say, for the whole context makes us sure of this, they are not used for purposes obscure and humble, but for purposes conditioned by evil; purposes, for example, of the warning, of the beacon.

I. What does a vessel to honour mean? The vessel which is hallowed so as to be usable by the master—*that* is the vessel unto honour. Its capacity may be large or small; its workmanship may be homely or elaborately magnificent.

II. "A vessel unto honour." It is a term glorious with that rare honour which cometh from God only, and which falls impartially, where it falls at all, upon the greatest and the least, as man counts great and little. A vessel is a thing which is altogether not its own. Its idea is that it is a thing for use, for the use of an agent who is not itself. It originates nothing; it only carries, conveys, transmits. It is not its own motor; it is carried; it is for a hand which is not itself to lift, to grasp, to bear away and about where it would and where it would not. It is doubly not its own; it carries what is not itself, the wine or the water, for the sake of which it is employed; and it is

carried by what is not itself, the Possessor, who may do what He will with His own, and who knows what the vessel does not know—His plan and aim in all the carrying.

H. C. G. Moule, *Christ is All*, p. 227.

Reference: ii. 21.—S. A. Tipple, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xv., p. 161.

Chap. iii., ver. 1.—"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come."

Christian Use of the Old Testament.

We stop at the last epistle of Paul to Timothy with something of the same interest with which one pauses at the last hamlet of the cultivated valley when there is nothing but moor beyond. It is the end, or all but the end, of our real knowledge of primitive Christianity; there we take our last distinct look around; further, the mist hangs thick, and few and distorted are the objects that we can discern in the midst of it.

I. But this last distinct view is overcast with gloom. "In the last days perilous times shall come." Then there follows a picture of what men would be, who in word and form were Christians, but indeed led the lives of the worst heathens. But the Apostle relies that Timothy would in his own generation struggle against this evil, because he had from a child been familiar with that revelation of God which is profitable for the teaching of truth and for the removing of error, for correcting all that was amiss, and fostering every seed of good in us, for the perfecting of God's servants in all good works. This is St. Paul's testimony to the importance of the Scriptures of the Old Testament, when as yet the truths of Christ's Gospel were known more by the hearing of the Apostle's teaching than by the teaching of their written words.

II. The predominant characteristic of the Old Testament is awe. In it we see one thing above all others insisted on, the worship of God and the keeping of His law. God is everywhere exalted; whilst the wisdom, the glory, the power, and the pretended righteousness of man, are all humbled in the dust together. Is not this the very impression which we need, in order to go with true and wholesome feelings to the cross of Christ? The Old Testament makes us understand that as the law of faith exalts most highly the law of works, so the law of works, on the other hand, is no less the highest and only true exaltation of the law of faith in Christ Jesus.

T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. vi., p. 245.

References: iii. 1-16.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. x., p. 365.

iii. 4.—G. Johnson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxii., p. 36. iii. 4-17.—H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 154; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. v., p. 193. iii. 5.—*Homilist*, vol. v., p. 131; J. S. Pearsall, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 193; J. H. Hitchens, *Ibid.*, vol. xxvi., p. 284; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 28; vol. iii., p. 11. iii. 10-17.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 148. iii. 13.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ix., p. 103. iii. 14.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 80. iii. 14, 15.—*Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 1.

Chap. iii., vers. 14-17.—**"But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of knowing of whom thou hast learned them," etc.**

THERE can be no reasonable doubt what is meant by the sacred writings with which Timothy had been familiar from his infancy. His mother, Eunice, was "a Jewess which believed," and the first care of a devout Jewish mother would be to instruct her child in the knowledge of those "oracles of God," the charge of which was one of the chief glories of her nation, and to fulfil the Divine precept: "These words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children." The term "sacred writings" which St. Paul employs here is a peculiar one. It is found nowhere else in the New Testament. It designates the Old Testament scriptures as a collection of writings clearly defined and separated by an acknowleged line of demarcation from ordinary secular books, a collection round which the tradition of the Jewish Church had, so to speak, erected a fence, enclosing them like the hallowed precinct of a consecrated building.

I. The Old Testament is a trustworthy historical record. This is repeatedly implied, though not directly asserted, in the discourses of our Lord. He stamps with His own authority the essential truth contained in the account of man's creation in the book of Genesis, when He appeals to the primeval order as the basis of the sanctity of the marriage bond, and quotes as the ordinance of the Creator Himself words which we read there as the historian's comment upon the facts which He records.

II. No less full is the Lord's own testimony to the prophetic and typical character of the Old Testament scriptures. He blames the Jews who searched them, because they failed to learn the lesson which they were intended to convey. They thought that eternal life lay in the letter, not in Him of whom the letter testified. A true insight would have made them recognise in Jesus the Messiah for whom they waited. But

while they boasted of their trust in Moses, they failed to believe his writings, and missed the sight of the Prophet of whom he wrote. Our Lord teaches that the Old Testament is full of types. Actions and events, and ordinances therein recorded, held concealed within them a deep significance of spiritual or prophetic meaning.

III. Our Lord deduces from the Scriptures authoritative rules of conduct and far-reaching moral principles. "The two commandments, on which hang all the law and the prophets," form an epitome of religion and morality, which is of universal application, and they are the sum and substance of the Old Testament teaching. The Old Testament supplies a principle of conduct, yet withal it is not in every respect a perfect director. For—

IV. Its rules require expansion. The law was the lesson given for man's childhood, and childhood requires clear and definite rules for its guidance. But now, in the full age of the new kingdom, the principles which underlay and animated the old rules must take their place. The more we study the New Testament, the more we are convinced that the Old Testament is a part and parcel of the same Divine revelation, and that the two cannot be divorced or sundered. In the words of St. Jerome, "Those who banish the doctrine of the Old Testament from the commonwealth of God, while they reject the Old Testament do not follow the New, for the New is confirmed by the testimonies of the Old.

A. F. KIRKPATRICK, *Oxford Undergraduates' Journal*, Jan. 31st, 1878.

REFERENCES: iii. 14-17.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 27; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. vi., p. 171. iii. 15.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxxi., No. 1866; J. N. Norton, *The King's Ferry Boat*, p. 81; Fletcher, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 267; H. W. Beecher, *Forty-Eight Sermons*, vol. i., p. 165; R. D. B. Rawnsley, *Village Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 256; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 39; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 72; A. Saphir, *Ibid.*, vol. xix., p. 305; W. Braden, *Ibid.*, vol. xxxii., p. 250; R. F. Horton, *Ibid.*, vol. xxxvi., p. 56; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 159.

Chap. iii., vers. 15, 16.

THE Bible the True Guide.

What are we to say to objections that may be raised to this or that portion of the Old Testament? Are we to close our ears to these objections? The answer to this question must depend in a great measure on the condition of life in which

God has been pleased to place us, and upon our own opportunities, attainments, and means of examining these objections thoroughly. The main end for which we have been sent into the world is to serve God, to promote His glory, and to save our souls and the souls of others. St. Paul tells Timothy he had great reason to bless God that from a child he had known the Holy Scriptures, which were the things that were able to make him wise unto salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus, and that "All scripture is given by inspiration of God." St. Paul therefore clearly implies that children may know the Scriptures, and be made wise unto salvation by them, through faith in Christ Jesus, without being troubled and perplexed with any of those objections to which I have referred. It is enough for them to know that Jesus Christ, as the Son of God, received the whole of the Old Testament as the Word of God.

I. If we men are to have true wisdom we also must become as little children; we must approach Divine things in a reverent spirit of love; mysteries are revealed to the meek. How many persons now approach the Bible as the Pharisees approached Jesus Christ, to entangle Him in His talk! They approach the Bible in order to criticise, cavil, and carp at it; they reverse the true order of things; they walk, shortsighted men, treating the word of God as if it were a culprit; they treat the Bible as a magistrate would treat a criminal; they forget that the day is coming when they themselves will stand as prisoners at the bar of Jesus' awful judgment-seat, and that they themselves will be tried there, and that the Bible itself will judge them at that awful day. No wonder that they are stricken with blindness; blindness is the inevitable punishment of pride and presumption; and their cavils at the Bible are the natural fruit of their boldness, which is their retribution.

II. Another requisite for readers of the Bible is patience. If we wait patiently with faith, God rewards us for our patience by explaining these hard sayings. Thus he tried Abraham by promises which seemed impossible; but Abraham believed God, and what seemed impossible thus came to pass, and Abraham thus became the father of the faithful. We ought to expect difficulties in a revelation from such a being as God with such a creature as man; therefore, we ought not to be staggered by them. These difficulties in the Old Testament are not as great as the difficulty of rejecting Jesus Christ who received the whole of the Old Testament. These difficulties are but as molehills compared with that mountain of difficulty. All these difficulties

are dissolved in the crucible of faith; we even rejoice in them because they are trials of our faith in Christ; and this we know is "the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." And so these difficulties are to us like fair leaves and like beautiful flowers, of which our unfading wreath and celestial garland of angelic glory will be woven.

BISHOP WORDSWORTH, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 3934.

Chap. iii., ver. 16.—"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

UNITY of Plan in the Old Testament.

I. The most cursory glance will show us that the Old Testament is divided into four parts—the Pentateuch, the historical books, the poetical books, the prophetical books, and I may say at once that I regard the Song of Solomon as the climax of the whole; all that precedes leads up to it, all that follows flows from it. It is a mountain summit, where you may see Jesus only in His transfiguration glory: a Pisgah height where the Moses of the law gives up the ghost, and whence, gazing down the vista of prophecy, you may see the good land which God has prepared for His people; or, varying the metaphor, I see the river of life, whose sources are in eternity, in the Pentateuch, dashing down the crags of Sinai and of the law; in the historical books, meandering through the broad plains of history; in the poetical books, rushing through the narrow rocky bed of personal religion, until it flows into this lovely little Loch Katrine of the Song of Solomon, and thence flows forth in fuller volume through the prophetical books until it loses itself at last in the ocean of eternal love. In the Pentateuch God appeals to man's conscience; in the historical books, to man's intellect; in the poetical books, to man's heart, and in the prophetical books He opens to men the future.

II. In the Pentateuch God appeals to man's conscience; in the historical books, to man's intellect; and he is bidden to survey human history, and see whether it is not always well with them who fear the Lord, and ill with those who reject Him. The historical books, for the most part, run in pairs, in which the positive and the negative side of this truth is put before us. In Joshua and Judges God is brought before us as the Deliverer, and we are asked to examine the history of the children of Israel from this point of view. In I. and II. Samuel God is regarded as the King; in I. and II. Kings we are asked to

trace the history of those who revere and those who despise God's prophets; in I. and II. Chronicles the same period of history is examined, but from a different point of view—namely, the reverence which different kings showed, or neglected to show, for the public worship of God.

III. In the poetical books we come to personal religion; in the prophetical books the future is spread out before you, and, gazing down the avenue of the prophets, the Lord will not hide from you those things which He is about to do; but, in spite of sin, failure, and rebellion, you will see the purposes of God remaining true, until, in the last chapter of the last of the minor prophets, you see the Sun of righteousness arising with healing in His wings, and you wait on the tiptoe of expectation for the opening of the New Testament, when the dayspring will arise and the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord.

E. A. STUART, *Children of God*, p. 11.

DOGMATIC Truth our Heritage.

By the "mystery" St. Paul here seems to mean a knowledge, Divine in its source, concealed and kept back for a time, but now imparted, or as we say, revealed. Now this Divine knowledge is chiefly summed up under two heads, according to the subject on which it treats. It treats, firstly, of God as teaching us concerning Himself; and secondly, of human nature, man as related to God.

I. The mistaken complaint of many at present is not so much that God has not given enough knowledge in revealing the mystery of godliness, but that He has given too much. They claim, that is, to set it aside wholly or in part, as involving a needless restriction on the free action of the mind, or to remould and alter it, as clashing with some conclusions of human wisdom. The forms of error are endless, and shift with the shifting phases of the human mind. But truth in its relation to them is older than them all, and stands fast through them all, and will doubtless survive them all, as it has already survived many. Thus the best, nay the only possible complete defence against error lies in active living convictions of the truth.

II. Repeatedly in Scripture is the Gospel faith spoken of as something held in common by all Christians. It is not matter of opinion, of deduction, or of induction. God's truth is given for all alike. He makes himself known in Christ, not to a priestly coterie but to mankind. Therefore the Church has educated the nation: men of the purest lives and brightest gifts have thought

it their highest privilege to trim the lamp of Divine truth. And before literature was diffused, and access to comments, or indeed to Scripture itself was common, the creeds of the Church did their work in keeping alive a saving knowledge amongst the people, and yet remain as standards of doctrine, and compendiums of Scripture truth. No term of science conveys to our minds what it ought, until we draw out all that it implies: and thus when we wish to be exact in our statements we are forced to be somewhat cumbrous in our terms. Men submit to this in science, but they seem to fret against it in theology; and then they reproach it as being dogmatic, without considering that this is the necessary characteristic of truth Divine in origin, and dealing with subjects to which human experience cannot reach.

H. HAYMAN, *Rugby Sermons*, p. 8.

REFERENCES: iii. 16.—R. Thomas, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xii., p. 261; H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, vol. xxviii., p. 97; F. W. Farrar, *Ibid.*, vol. xxix., p. 88; H. Wace, *Ibid.*, vol. xxxvi., p. 241; J. Clifford, *Daily Strength for Daily Living*, p. 373; F. W. Farrar, *Everyday Christian Life*, p. 143.

Chap. iii., vers. 16, 17.

THE Profitableness of Scripture.

We have here two great affirmations concerning the Scriptures. First, they are inspired of God; next, they are religiously profitable.

I. First, however, it is necessary to bear in mind the distinction between inspiration and revelation. Inspiration is an inbreathing and vital quickening of whatever may be the normal faculties of a man, whereby their natural force and religious sensibilities are augmented; such as we conceive the processes of the Holy Ghost to be in ordinary religious life, only, here, special in its forms and measures. Revelation is knowledge imparted from without: facts and truths of which we are ignorant are made known to us. If every inspiration is not a supernatural revelation, neither is supernatural revelation a mere inspiration of natural faculty. Both are to be distinctly recognised.

II. The Apostle affirms that the sacred writers are inspired of God—God-breathed, the recipients of a Divine afflatus. The range and variety of the profitableness of Scripture must be noted. It is a book for human life; not for churches nor for devotions only, but for every domain and relationship of human beings. (1) It is profitable for doctrine, for teaching true ideas or principles of religious life. It makes men wise unto salvation. Men feel and

act according to the thoughts and sentiments which they entertain. No wise man will undervalue correct theological notions: they are indispensable conditions of goodness. According to the Apostle the Scriptures are the distinctive source of our theological teaching. True doctrines concerning God and religion are revealed in the Bible. (2) The other great idea of the profitableness of Scripture is represented by the words "reproof," "correction." Be the book historically what it may, come whence it may, its moral and religious ministry to men cannot be denied it: and it is the most conclusive evidence of its Divine authority. As a book of moral and religious truth only will it live: as such only need we wish it to live. So long as human souls feel sin and sorrow, so long will they prize the salvation and comfort of the Scripture.

H. Allon, *The Indwelling Christ*, p. 123.

References: iv. 1.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. v., p. 272. iv. 1, 2.—*Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xvii., p. 157. iv. 1-22.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. x., p. 443. iv. 2.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 129. iv. 4.—*Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xx., p. 40; *Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. v., p. 287.

Chap. iv., ver. 7.—"I have fought a good fight."

I. Look at the Christian life under the aspect of a fight. In a sense, this aspect of life is not peculiar to that of the Christian. Indeed, I dare to say, that, so far from the followers of the world being exempt from toil and hardship, it would not take a man half the care and time and trouble to get to heaven, which it takes any man to get rich, and many a man to get to hell. The question, therefore, is not whether we shall fight, but what for, and on whose side—on that of Jesus, whose award is life, or on that of sin, whose wages is death. Now, with regard to the Christian's fight, I remark (1) He has to fight against the world, (2) He has to fight against Satan.

II. The character of the Christian's fight. It is a good fight. (1) Because it is in a good cause. Your enemies are not of your kindred, bone of your bone, flesh of your flesh; they are the enemies of God and Christ, of virtue and liberty, of light and peace, of your children, and of your race, of your bodies and of your souls; tyrants that would bind you in chains worse than iron, and burn, not your house above your head, but yourself in hell for ever. (2) Because here victory is unmingled joy. It is not so in other fights. The laurels that are won where groans of suffering mingle with the shouts of battle are steeped in tears;

and when cannon roar, and bells ring out a victory, and shouting crowds throng the streets, and illuminations turn night into day, dark is many a home where fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, widows and orphans, weep for the brave who shall never return. There are thorns in victory's proudest crown. He, whom men called the Iron Duke, is reported to have said that there was nothing so dreadful as a battle won, except a battle lost. Thank God, our joy over sins slain, bad passions subdued, Satan defeated, has to suffer no such abatements.

T. GUTHRIE, *Speaking to the Heart*, p. 127.

REFERENCES: iv. 7.—P. Brooks, *Sermons*, p. 57. iv. 7, 8.—*Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 305; D. Davies, *Ibid.*, vol. xxvii., p. 35. iv. 8.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 10; H. P. Liddon, *Advent Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 82; J. Vaughan, *Sermons*, 12th series, p. 181. iv. 9-17.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. ix., p. 287.

Chap. iv., ver. 10.—"**For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.**"

THE Apostate.

I. Consider the history and fall of Demas. Men live after they are dead, some in their good deeds, others in their bad. Many a man would have been unheard of, but for his crimes; living but for these in happy obscurity, and going down to his grave unnoticed and unknown. But the case of Demas is not that of one who owes the world's only knowledge of him to his crimes, like a felon whom a scaffold raises above the heads of the vulgar crowd who have come to see him die. This is not the first time we hear of Demas, and, indeed, had St. Paul written no second letter to Timothy, or had God in His providence been pleased to allow this epistle to perish with other writings of the Apostles, Demas might have given a name to Protestant churches; he might have been sainted in the Romish calendar, and had devotees soliciting his prayers, while they burned candles and offered gifts at his shrine. The fall of such an one as Demas, like some tall cliff which, undermined by the waves, precipitates itself, with the roar of thunder, headlong into the boiling sea, must have startled the Church at the time, and wakened from their slumber those that slept in Sion; and still, as if its echoes were yet sounding round the world, let us listen to its warning. It teaches the highest of us to take heed lest we fall; the happiest of us to rejoice with trembling, and all of us to watch and pray, that, keeping our garments unspotted from the world, we may not enter into temptation.

II. Consider the cause of Demas' fall—he loved this present world. It is not the world, observe, nor its money, nor its honours, nor its enjoyments, that the Bible condemns, but the love of them.

III. Learn the lesson the case teaches. Give your hands to the world, but keep your heart for God. It is a very good world if kept in its own place; like fire and water, a useful servant, but a bad and most tyrannous master. Love it not, and yet love it. Love it with the love of Him who gave His Son to die for it. You must make the world better, or it will make you worse.

T. GUTHRIE, *Speaking to the Heart*, p. 201.

REFERENCES: iv. 10.—J. H. Evans, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 231. iv. 11.—G. Calthrop, *Words to my Friends*, p. 297; J. A. Carr, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xxi., p. 52; H. C. Nelson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 350; *Ibid.*, vol. xix., p. 381; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vi., p. 317; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 211; vol. v., p. 32. iv. 13.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. ix., No. 542; J. Thain Davidson, *The City Youth*, p. 141; J. Stalker, *The New Song*, p. 90; *Expositor*, 1st series, vol. i., p. 286; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 132; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xi, p. 273. iv. 15.—Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 195. iv. 16.—A. K. H. B., *Graver Thoughts of a Country Parson*, 3rd series, p. 85. iv. 20.—*Ibid.*, *Sermons*, vol. xxv., No. 1453. iv. 22.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. vii., p. 225; W. Walters, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 168.

Chap. iv., ver. 11.—"Only Luke is with me."

PHYSICIAN and Evangelist.

I. St. Paul had been suffering from serious illness in Galatia. Very soon afterwards St. Luke appears with him, for the first time, in Troas. During subsequent years they were frequently associated together in the closest intimacy, and we have the best reasons for believing that St. Paul's health was always delicate. What so natural as to suppose that the first acquaintance at Troas was marked by the exercise of St. Luke's medical skill, and that the same skill was on many subsequent occasions available for the alleviation of suffering and fatigue?

II. It is no fancy which detects in St. Luke's Gospel the traces of a professional feeling in various incidental passages, as well as in allusions to subjects which may properly be called medical. The main feature, however, of the collect for St. Luke's Day, is that it lays hold of that fact concerning him which has been noted above, and turns it to a spiritual use—that is, sets before us this Evangelist and Physician of the soul, and offers up the supplication that, by the wholesome medicines of the doctrine delivered by him, all the diseases of our souls

may be healed. Those who are suffering deeply from sorrow or sin do often find in St. Luke's Gospel a special consolation. We could not find anywhere a more wholesome medicine in all times of sin and weakness and temptation, than in those passages concerning prayer, which St. Luke's Gospel, and his Gospel alone, contains for us. If in other places the doctrine delivered by him is soothing and consoling in sorrow, these are medicinal and remedial for the worst diseases of the soul.

J. S. HOWSON, *Our Collects, Epistles, and Gospels*, p. 144.

REFERENCES: iv. 6.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xvii., No. 989; W. J. Knox Little, *Manchester Sermons*, p. 259; P. Brooks, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxix., p. 300; H. Simon, *Ibid.*, p. 36; H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, vol. xxx., p. 341; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 275; *Homilist*, vol. v., p. 194. iv. 6-8.—*Homilist*, vol. v., p. 337; 2nd series, vol. ii., p. 617; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. viii., p. 87; A. Maclaren, *The Secret of Power*, p. 313.

TITUS.

REFERENCES: i. 1.—R. W. Church, *Anglican Pulpit of To-day*, p. 187; E. B. Pusey, *Guardian*, October 25th, 1882. i. 1-11.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. viii., p. 69.

Chap. i., ver. 2.—"In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began."

HOPE of Eternal Life.

I. Note the antiquity of this promise. It was made ages and ages ago. There are two considerations, I imagine, in the Apostle's mind—the actual promise made in time, and the Divine purpose from which that promise sprang, fixed in eternity; and he joins the two considerations together without the least impropriety of thought. No sooner had man occasion for the promise than the promise was made to him. The Jews who were contemporary with Christ vainly supposed that the law given by Moses had in it a life-giving power. They stumbled at that stumbling-stone, for they sought eternal salvation, not by faith in Christ, but, as it were, by the works of the law; whereas the law was given for a widely different purpose, and not with that object at all. If, indeed, a law had been given which was capable of giving life, then, no doubt, justification would have been by the law. The man might have looked to it for his acquittal; but law, though essential for the regulation of manners, is, of its own nature, incapable of giving eternal salvation; for he who obeys its ordinances can, at most, but deserve to escape from its penalties.

II. Consider the security of the promise. "God, who cannot lie," made it. He who has made the promise to us cannot, from His very nature, fail in its fulfilment. There are many people in the world who, with the best intentions, are unable to help us; many who would fain do for us all that lies in their power, but who, from very ignorance, are useless in the day of trouble. There are others, again, on whom you have been leaning with fond hopes of substantial aid, who yet fail you

when the day of calamity approaches—fair-weather friends, who disappear at the very first symptom of a cloud. Many accidents, again, may prevent a man, who is really sincere, and bent upon helping us, from keeping his promise. Without any intention of so doing, he may deceive us in the most important matters, and fail at the very crisis when he is wanted most; and of course, in many cases, we cannot conceal from ourselves that men have an interest in deceiving us. We cannot in all cases rely implicitly on their word. But, with respect to the promise which is now occupying our thoughts, not one jot or one tittle shall fail. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but God's word never. He cannot lie.

III. Note the extent of the promise. It embraces you and all mankind. God, who cannot lie, has set before us, with all plainness, and with most comfortable assurance, the hope of eternal life. There is but one road that leads to it, one door that opens into it; but the road, though a narrow one, is broad enough for all who really mean to travel on it. The door is wide enough for any man to enter in, and go in and out and find pasture. "He that hath the Son hath life."

BISHOP ATLAY, *Penny Pulpit*, new series, No. 777.

REFERENCES: i. 2.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. x., No. 568. i. 6.—*Outline Sermons to Children*, p. 262. i. 7.—F. W. Farrar, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxx., p. 321. i. 9.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. viii., p. 193. i. 11-14.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxxii., No. 1894. i. 12.—L. Abbott, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxviii., p. 46. i. 12—ii. 15.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. viii., p. 131. i. 13.—W. C. Magee, *Sermons at Bath*, p. 220.

Chap. i., ver. 15 (with Matt. v., ver. 8).

PURITY.

The two texts are two motives. With one voice they enforce purity; but each by its own argument and with its own persuasion. The one looks rather at the present, the other at the future; the one sets before us a practical effect of purity, the other a spiritual; one tells how it shall enable us to move healthily and wholesomely among our fellows; the other, how it shall fit and qualify us for that beatific vision which is, being interpreted, the inheritance of the saints in light.

I. St. Paul is addressing a beloved convert, charged with the temporary oversight of the young church at Crete. Now there was a power at work in the Cretan congregations, as everywhere, which St. Paul looked upon as the antagonist of the light and life which was in Christ Jesus. Strange to say, it took the

form of a sort of ostentatious puritanism; it was an influence calling itself moral, sensitively jealous for law and sanctity, and dreading the gospel of grace as dangerous to virtue. St. Paul knew better. St. Paul had tried both systems, and he knew by experience that whereas law is weak, through the flesh, grace is mighty through the Spirit. He thought little of a righteousness isolating itself from atonement, or a purity dispensing with sanctification. He tells his converts where alone purity can be found; in the heart made clean by grace, in the life set free by the Spirit. Be pure in heart and all things are pure to you.

II. The pure shall see God. The motive was a strong one which said, "To the pure all things are pure." Be pure in heart, and you shall find, or else make, purity everywhere. Be pure in heart, and intellect shall be pure, and conscience; no film shall cloud the mental vision, no stain shall sully the mirror of duty. But "blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." This lifts the matter into a higher region still, and tells how not mind alone, not conscience alone, but the very spirit and soul of the man hang upon purity of heart for its welfare and for its life. There is a sight of God in the far future. There is also a sight which is now. If there be in any of us the desire, hereafter or here, to see God; if we feel that not to see Him is misery, that never to see Him would indeed be the second death—we must become pure in heart.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *University Sermons*, p. 425.

REFERENCES: i. 15.—Forsyth and Hamilton, *Pulpit Parables*, p. 116; F. W. Robertson, *Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 122. ii. 1.—J. Halsey, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxiv., p. 393. ii. 10.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 284.

Chap. ii., vers. 11, 12.—"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."

EVERYDAY LIFE.

Note a few things that combine to make up what we call our everyday life.

I. *Conversation* is a large element of everyday life. The power of speech is one of the grand distinctions of man, and of his life upon the earth. It is thus that he clothes invisible thoughts with form, and confers upon the subtle intangible reality an immortality of earthly recognition. Our daily conversation determines all the tone of our mind: it stamps and it stereotypes

our temper. It reveals whether charity and virtue, manly or womanly grace dignify our character, or whether we are frivolous, vain, heartless, and worldly. Who can measure the unkindness that may be crowded into a single word, or the thoughtlessness, the selfishness, the pride, the vanity, the cruelty, the crime, that may be condensed into a syllable? Everyday life means everyday talk.

II. *Wish* is an equally extended department of everyday life. It is in our nature to be conscious of desires after a great many things, and these desires are not in themselves sinful; they are even necessary to the maintenance of life, to the onward progress of mankind, to the subduing and replenishing of the earth which God has lent to us, and in which He has given us a life-interest. These desires of all kinds are the spring of nearly all we do in life. Everyday life means everyday wish.

III. *Work* is another main element in life. The business of life, the daily toil and drudgery of a man—these help to constitute his everyday life: not simply what he talks of or wishes for, but what he actually does in this world. Everyday life includes all the things that are done by us, either as duty or necessity, under the inspiration of the lowest as well as the highest motives. It must be possible to bring all this under the empire of religion, to supply a set of motives that can dignify the commonest occupation, consecrate the humblest toil, and make daily drudgery Divine.

IV. But there is another large department of everyday life—I mean recreation. That which is recreation to one man would be a complete penance to another; that which some think a most enjoyable relaxation is to others an intolerable weariness. That religion which does not enter into these four regions of a man's life—his talk, his wishes, his work and his recreation—is as yet utterly inoperative. "We should live," says the Apostle, "soberly, righteously and godly in this present world." In other words, in our conversation, our desires, our occupation and our pleasures, we should do three things—(1) Gain the victory over our passions, "live soberly." (2) Respect the claims of our neighbours, "live righteously." (3) Derive all our motives from the highest source, "live godly." *Sobriety* means the chastisement of all our passions, the resolute endeavour to gain and keep the control of all our desires, the determination to repress all angry feelings, as well as impure fancies, to subdue inordinate affections quite as much as depraved taste. *Righteousness* is clearly something more than

a refusal to commit an act of cruelty or dishonesty. In our talks, in our wishes, in our work, and our pleasures, we are to do the just and righteous thing.

V. *Godliness.* We must date and draw our motives from the highest source. The government of all our passions, the recognition of every just claim upon us, must spring from no mere vague notion that it is right to do this; but from the discovery of the ground of our nature, our relation to the living God, our obligation to the suffering Saviour, and our responsibility to the Spirit of Grace.

H. R. REYNOLDS, *Notes of the Christian Life*, p. 262.

REFERENCES: ii. 11-15.—*Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 145; *Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. iii., p. 101.

Chap. ii., ver. 13.—"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

WE have here for our consideration three points embodied in these words. The grace of God has appeared, the glory of God is to appear; the appearance of the glory is a blessed hope; the disciplining of the grace prepares us for the expectation of the glory.

I. First, then, take that thought, The appearance of the grace leads to the appearance of the glory. The identity of the form of expression in the two clauses is intended to suggest the likeness of and the connection between the two appearances. In both there is a visible manifestation of God, and the latter rests upon the former and completes and crowns it. But the difference between the two is as strongly marked as the analogy; and it is not difficult to grasp distinctly the differences which the Apostle intends. While both are manifestations of the Divine character in exercise, the specific phase (so to speak) of that character which appears is in one case "grace," and in the other "glory." If one might venture on any illustration in regard to such a subject, it is as when the pure white light is sent through glass of different colours, and at one moment beams mild through refreshing green, and in the next flames in fiery red that warns of danger.

II. The second thought which is involved in these words is that the appearing of the glory is a blessed hope. The hope is blessed; or, as we have already remarked, the word "happy" may, perhaps, be substituted with advantage because it will be full of blessedness when it is a reality, therefore it is full of joy while it is but a hope.

III. Finally one word about the last consideration here, viz., the grace disciplines us to hope for the glory. The very idea of discipline involves the notion that it is a preparatory stage, a transient process for a permanent result. It carries with it the idea of immaturity, of apprenticeship, so to speak. If it is discipline, it is discipline for some condition which is not yet reached. And so if the grace of God comes "disciplining" then there must be something beyond the epoch and era within which the discipline is confined. Yield to the discipline and the hope will be strengthened.

A. MACLAREN, *Sermons in Manchester*, p. 149.

Chap. ii., ver. 13.—"Looking for that blessed hope."

THE Return of our Lord.

I. Note first the hope mentioned in our text. It is the manifestation of Christ in glory. It is the pre-eminent hope of Scripture. Just as, during the old dispensation, the coming of our Lord in the flesh was the hope of the faithful, so in the new dispensation, the coming again of the Lord occupies the same position from the time of Adam, and especially from the days of Abraham, right down to the incarnation of our Lord, what was the action of the faithful? Waiting and looking for the fulfilment of the promise. Over and over again, we find the Messiah spoken of as the hope of Israel, and all the faithful were waiting for the redemption. As the days predicted by Daniel drew on, there came a general feeling abroad that the time was coming near when the hope of Israel should appear; and at last it was consummated when old Simeon took the infant Christ in his arms and said, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation." The coming of Christ in the flesh was the consummation of the hope of the old dispensation. The first dispensation waited for a Christ who should bring redemption for the soul; we wait for a Christ who shall bring redemption for the body. Notice one or two particulars of the hope. What is included? (1) The hope of seeing Him. Where real love is, there is a desire to see the face of the loved one. (2) We shall see Him in His beauty. The gabardine of Nazareth effectually hid the glory of Deity from the eyes of men, for the eyes of the people were blind with prejudice; but when He comes the second time there will be glory in His person.

II. This hope is a blessed one. The Lord Jesus is the Hope and we know that He is blessed. It is a blessed hope (1)

because of its influence and (2) because of its surroundings. It is blessed because of the blessings that come with it. (3) It is blessed to those of us who have precious dust sleeping in the sepulchre. (4) It is most blessed because it is the consummation of Christ's glory. His glory is not complete until that day. He is waiting until His enemies are made His footstool. Where Christ is surrounded with glorified bodies as well as with glorified spirits, there will His glory be complete.

III. What is the looking for this blessed hope? It is the attitude of the believer, the quiet expectancy of his heart towards this appearing. "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man—no, not the angels of God." But it is possible for God's children, and it is incumbent upon them to be on the lookout for the signs of His coming. And what are to be the signs of the last days? A general profession of godliness without any power. We have only to read the Second Epistle to Timothy, to find almost the photograph of the present days. Let us seek to combine the watching and the doing—never to get into a mere visionary gazing-up into heaven and doing nothing for God; and on the other hand, never to be a hard, practical, machine-like Christian, knowing nothing of fellowship with the risen, and the living, and the returning Christ. Blessed are they who watch and work. Blessed are they who watch as they work.

A. G. BROWN, *Penny Pulpit*, new series, No. 1103.

REFERENCES: ii. 13.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. v., p. 273. ii. 13, 14.—*Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. vi., p. 261.

Chap. ii., ver. 14.—"Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

ZEAL.

I. It is not a quality of nature, but an acquirement of grace, of which the Apostle speaks; for he describes, not what is peculiar to this or that man, but what is common to all converted men. What, then, is zeal for good works? Zeal is intense earnestness in the accomplishment of an object, passionate ardour in the pursuit of it. It is not, therefore, mere excitement of feeling, mere demonstrative warmth of expression, mere quickness of emotion, but something far more deep and enduring. It is a working, practical energy. It is a power which may be directed to things indifferent, to things good, or to things bad. Zeal is force—moral force; for it is the great moving power of the world. Force can only arise from

an adequate motive, just as the great river is not fed by the scanty summer showers, but gathers its strength from the rains that fall upon a thousand hills.

II. The ultimate spring is love—purest, holiest, sweetest, most abiding of all motives, the very essence of true religion, the Alpha and Omega of its power, the one thing which of all earthly things approaches most nearly towards omnipotence, for it is itself the reflection and choicest prerogative of God.

III. Christian zeal must be a steady, permanent force, not transient, not occasional, not flickering up into a vehement flame now and then and dying away again, but like the sun in the midst of the heavens, or like the constant laws of nature that hold sun, moon and stars ever circling round their central God. It measures everything, not by itself, but by the majesty of Him for whom it is done, and who sanctions with His own eternal recompense, even a cup of water given for His sake.

E. GARBETT, *Experiences of the Inner Life*, p. 138.

REFERENCES: ii. 14.—C. Garrett, *Loving Councils*, p. 104; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. ii., No. 70; A. Maclaren, *A Year's Ministry*, vol. i., p. 221; E. Garbett, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 209; H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, vol. xi., p. 37; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. i., p. 223. ii. 16.—J. Thain Davidson, *Sure to Succeed*, p. 222. iii.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. viii., p. 215. iii. 1-4.—J. Oswald Dykes, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvii., p. 113. iii. 1-8.—J. W. Lance, *Ibid.*, vol. xxxi., p. 41.

Chap. iii., vers. 3, 6.—"For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another," etc.

I. UP to a certain point, men of all schools of religious and philosophical thought are agreed, both as to the facts of the moral state of the world, and as to the nature of the improvements required for it. They differ widely in their theories of the essence of morality, or the foundation of moral obligation; they differ in the ideals that they hold up to men as embodying the supremest moral excellence; they differ in the attractive power of their ideal, and in the strength of the motives they offer for pursuing it, and for resisting temptation; but they all agree as to their elementary moral precepts. And it is not too much to say that all serious moralists are agreed, further, that according to the simple rule for knowing good from bad, the actual state of the moral world is bad and not good. The world is wicked; that we start with as a fact—not as a part of the Christian or any other theory of the way that the world

ought to be conducted, but as to the state in which the world is; a fact which any complete theory of the world must account for, and which any competent guide of the world, if such there be, will have to remedy. To convince the individual of sin is a harder task. The one witness who is competent to adduce all the facts has an interest in keeping silence; the one judge whose verdict is on earth final has an interest in acquittal; and this being so, it is small wonder that an acquittal is often pronounced unhesitatingly, is oftener still pronounced after a decent hesitation and with some moderate reserves. But the world is condemned, whenever it is really judged, and the condemnation of the world must, in the eyes of any thoughtful person, throw grave suspicion on the acquittal of the individual.

II. The only way to treat sin like this is to make a clean sweep of it altogether. Here there can be no question of adjusting a machine that is just out of gear, of harmonising elements salutary in themselves, though at present imperfectly combined. It may be that the evil mass is composed of things originally good, but that does not alter the fact that it is now evil, incurably evil. Let a flood sweep over it, and blot out all its features, for so, and so only, we may hope to see it washed clean. A little washing and rubbing here and there will not be enough; the washing of a foul world like ours must do no less than wash us out of ourselves—must rub off our whole self; in fact, we want a washing of regeneration, a washing which shall be, first of all, a death unto sin, and so make a possibility for a new birth unto righteousness. When this washing is effected, when the sinner has died again to his old life and started again in the new, then, and then only, is he capable of receiving the "renewing of the Holy Spirit," then only is it possible for that power to enter his heart, from which "all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed." There is no doubt that those men were right who, a hundred years ago or less, declared to a self-satisfied world that this was the Gospel, that the true cure for all moral evil was, not sound moral advice, too good to be followed, not earnest moral effort which the sinful soul was unable to make, or at least to sustain, but the reception of a cleansing power from without, that the soul must be super-naturally, miraculously, divinely, undeservedly, delivered from its evil past, if it were ever to start on a new and better life, if it were ever to be made natural to it to do good, or possible for it to deserve well. Nothing short of a miracle can put a sinner in the way of repentance, and that the blood of Christ has, as

history proves, exercised that miraculous power, that when a man has believed in that blood, he has been saved from his sins, even as experience proves the reality of sin, so it proves, not less divinely though unhappily less universally, the reality of repentance and salvation through faith in Christ.

W. H. SIMCOX, *Oxford Undergraduates' Journal*, March 17th, 1881.

REFERENCES: iii. 4-7.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 564; *Outline Sermons to Children*, p. 264.

Chap. iii., ver. 8.—**"These things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works."**

I. THE Gospel is degraded unless it is asserted strongly. "These things I will that thou affirm constantly," or as the words might be rendered, "asseverate pertinaciously, persistently, positively, affirm and assert constantly and confidently." That is the way in which Paul thinks it ought to be spoken. If it is a message, the messenger's business is to deliver it as received and its sender's business, not his, is to look after it when delivered. And if it is a *faithful* message, then it ought to be asserted on lips that are eloquent, because they are *believing*; and to come, not as a word of the speaker's own, or the result of his thinking, or with a "peradventure," but as with the force of the "verily, verily, I say unto you," of the incarnate and personal Truth Himself.

II. Again, there is another thought here worth considering, viz., that this positive assertion of the truths of revelation is the best foundation to lay for practical godliness "*in order that* they which have believed might be careful to maintain good works." Now, we are often told that our evangelical teaching is far away from daily life, and some people go the length of saying that the central doctrine of the substitutionary work of Jesus Christ is an immoral doctrine. I am not going to discuss the latter statement now. If the former one is ever true, it is the fault of the preacher, not of the message. Rightly understood and presented, the great body of truth which we call the Gospel, and which is summarised in the preceding context, grips daily life very tightly, while on the other hand, of all the impotent things in this world, none are more impotent than exhortations to be good, which are cut away from the great truths of Christ's mission. If it be true that the best foundation for all practical godliness is in the proclamation and the possession

of the great message of Christ's love, two things follow, the one is that Christian people ought to familiarise themselves with the practical side of their faith, just as Christian ministers ought to be in the habit of insisting, not merely upon the great revelation of God's love in Jesus Christ, but upon that revelation considered as the motive and the pattern for holy living. (2) Another consequence is that here is a rough but a pretty effective test of so-called religious truth. Does it help to make a man better? It is worth something if it does: if not, then it may be ruled out as of small consequence.

III. The true test and outcome of professing faith is conduct.

IV. No one will keep up these good works who does not give his mind to it. "That they . . . might be careful to maintain." My text suggests one chief means of securing that result—the habit of meditation upon the facts of the Gospel revelation looked at in their practical bearing on our daily life and character.

A. MACLAREN, *The God of the Amen*, p. 148.

REFERENCES: iii. 8-14.—H. W. Beecher, *Sermons*, 5th series, p. 341. iii. 9.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 324. iii. 12.—W. Morison, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxi., p. 24.

PHILEMON.

Ver. 10.—"Onesimus."

MASTER and Slave.

Observe in this letter—

I. The exquisite courtesy of the Apostle. The manner of the Epistle teaches us as well as its matter. He offers to pay the debt of Onesimus for him, or to make up what he had taken, out of his own slender purse. Onesimus must pay what he owed. It would be a poor beginning in his new Christian life to attempt to evade his obligations. "Put that on mine account," says St. Paul. And then he adds, as if this were not sufficiently businesslike for a Christian, "I, Paul, have written it with mine own hand; I will repay it." This principle condemns all attempt to slip off, or shuffle over, any social or commercial engagements on the score of Christian claims or exclusiveness.

II. Note the destination of Onesimus after he had been converted to Christianity. He is bidden to return to his master. True, St. Paul writes a beautiful letter for the runaway slave to present when he gets back; but back he must go. St. Paul is kind, but firm. Onesimus, being now a Christian, must return to the post which he had deserted. Surely here we may learn something about the social duties of the Christian, and especially of any one who has been newly impressed with Christian truth. The more worldly our business is, the more do we want good Christians to be engaged in its management. God is with us in many ways, and yet I do not know that He ever specially visited any one who had forsaken a clear duty without a clear call to do so, though it were professedly to serve Him better. Wherever we are, God is. Wherever we work, He works. There is no greater mistake than to think that we are kept from God by our business.

H. JONES, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxx., p. 326.

Ver. 15.—"For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever."

SOCIAL Power of the Gospel.

I. We see here, first of all, what sort of results St. Paul expected to flow from the reconciling and combining force of

the Christian faith. In nothing does Christianity differ more profoundly from some philosophies which seem to have a superficial resemblance to it, than in this: it does not allow a man to think of himself as an isolated unit, while forgetful of other men: it does not allow a class to entrench itself in its privileges or excellences, and to ignore the claims of other classes; it does not allow a race to stiffen itself in its prejudices, and to forget that other races are also members of the human family, and to gifts and endowments that are all their own. It may be asked, Did not St. Paul beg Philemon to give Onesimus his freedom? It must be answered, No, he did not. He hinted at this, perhaps, when he expressed his confidence that Philemon would do more than he was asked to do. But he did not prefer a formal request to this effect; much less did he insist on it. The Apostles addressed themselves to the strictly practical task of lodging the Christian faith and life in the minds and hearts of masters and slaves alike: confident that, in time, the faith would act as a powerful solvent upon such an institution, by creating a new estimate of life.

II. We may note here how entirely for the time being, St. Paul's interest is concentrated on a single soul. He writes as though there were no person in the world to think about except Onesimus, and, relatively to Onesimus, his master Philemon. The world, depend upon it, is not saved by abstract ideas, however brilliant; it is saved by the courageous individualising efforts of Christian love.

III. Let us note how a Christian should look at the events of life; at the commonplace and trivial events, as well as at those which appear striking and important. Every such event has a purpose, whether we can credit it or no; a purpose to be made plain in the eternal world, in the mysterious state of existence which awaits every one of us, when we have passed the gate of death. To St. Paul the future life was as clear as the shining of the sun is in heaven: and, therefore, he naturally wrote to Philemon, "Perhaps Onesimus was therefore parted from thee for a season, that thou mightest enjoy him for ever." And yet remark that "perhaps." St. Paul will not encourage us in a rash and presumptuous confidence, when we endeavour to interpret in detail God's providence in this life by the light of the next. St. Paul saw, as far as most men, into the purposes of God; yet, when he would interpret God's design in respect of a given human life, he reverently adds "perhaps."

H P. LIDDON, *Advent Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 98.

HEBREWS.

Chap. i., ver. 1.—"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets."

THE Bible as a Revelation of God.

Two things are affirmed by this writer. First, that God spake to the Jewish nation by the prophets of the Old Testament, evidently in an especial and supernatural manner; and next, that He spake to them by a gradual revelation of the teaching, communicated to them in diversified ways.

I. Let it be admitted that the Bible is a supernatural revelation from God: then it is as much an incarnation of the Divine Spirit as the Emmanuel was of the Divine Son—as the physical creation was of the Divine Father. If a theory of the inspiration of the Bible could be formulated, it would be an exception to every manifestation of God in the physical and in the moral world. It is one thing to understand the proof of a fact, it is another to recognise the fact that is proven. I can recognise the proofs that establish the facts that I am a living being, that the corn ripens, that the tides ebb and flow, that the needle points to the north, that an earthquake occurred yesterday; but I cannot understand what life, and tidal influence, and magnetism and electricity are. So I may understand the proofs that the Bible is a revelation from God, and that the Bible writers were inspired, without being able to understand the methods of revelation and inspiration.

II. In looking at the Bible, two classes of phenomena have to be accounted for. (1) First, the supernatural element has to be recognised and accounted for. The proofs of the Divine element in the Bible are almost inexhaustible. Almost every week, some unsuspected but harmonious line of proof is opened out to us, proclaiming the Divine. (2) The second great characteristic of the Bible are the marks and proofs of its human authorship. I cannot resolve the humanity of the sacred writers into passive instruments of the Divine. I cannot think all the pious passion of David, all the personal avowals of Paul

unreal: I cannot reduce them to the mock personages of a sacred drama, and the inspiring spirit with the simulator of human voices and feelings. Only by fully and fearlessly recognising the human element in the authorship of Scripture can we even understand it.

H. ALLON, *The Indwelling Christ*, p. 299.

REFERENCES: i. 1.—*Preacher's Lantern*, vol. i., p. 144; F. W. Robertson, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 136; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xvii., p. 183; J. Bainton, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvii., p. 219. i. 1, 2.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. i., p. 60; vol. x., p. 275; A. M. Brown, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 44; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 58; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., pp. 38, 39; H. J. Wilmot-Buxton, *The Life of Duty*, vol. i., p. 31; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. ix., p. 284; D. Rhys Jenkins, *Eternal Life*, p. 146. i. 1-3.—R. W. Dale, *The Jewish Temple and the Christian Church*, p. 11.

Chap. i., vers. 1-4.

THE Son above the Angels.

I. The Son is the end of all history. The Father hath appointed the Lord Jesus Christ, His Son, the heir of all things. There is nothing excepted that is not given unto Him. He has obtained the Church as the first and central part of His inheritance. As the material sun is placed in the firmament to be a source of light and heat and joy, with the rest of the creation of God, so God appoints the Church to be the firstfruits of His creatures—the body of Christ, wherewith He influences and blesses, whereby He guides and controls all things.

II. In Him God made "all ages" or "all worlds." It is natural that He who is the Alpha should also be the Omega. Scripture teaches us creation is the work of the triune God. God has made all things by Christ, according to Christ, and for Christ.

III. Before all history He is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person. Wherever He looks He sees Christ, the light. Without Christ, there is darkness. The Father is light, yet not to us without the mediation of the light, which is Christ. Without Christ He is darkness by excess of brightness.

IV. Throughout the course of history, in providence, Christ beareth all things with the word of His power. If it were not for Jesus and for the atonement, if it were not for the Lamb foreordained from the foundation of the world, the history of this world would never have been continued after the fall of man. Christ is Lord of all. The whole universe centres in Him. A

star appears at the time of Messiah's advent. The sun loses his splendour when Jesus Christ dies upon the cross. It is the Lord Jesus who shall make all things new. And all developments are borne up and moved by the word of His power.

A. SAPHIR, *Expository Lectures on the Hebrews*, vol, i., p. 44.

THE Mediator of the New Covenant, the Incarnate Son, above the Angels.

Consider the marvellous unity of the two Covenants.

I. "God hath spoken." This is the first point. A living God and a loving God must needs speak. The god of the philosophers is a silent God, for he hath neither life nor affection; but our God, who created the heavens and the earth, who is and who loves, must speak. Even in the creation, which is an act of the condescension of God, He utters His thoughts; and when He created man as the consummation of the world, it was for this purpose, that man should hear Him and love Him, and should rejoice in His light and in His life. When sin enters into the world, silence ensues.

II. Man having, by his own sin, fallen away from God, and silence reigning now, it is only the infinite compassion and love of God, that induces him to speak. If there were no redemption, there would be no revelation. If there were no blood of the Lamb, there would not be a single word uttered unto man by the most High.

III. And that God hath spoken is a very awful thing, full of power and life. We have got accustomed to it, to believe that we have the thoughts of God embodied in His world, and that He who is Almighty and blessed in Himself, and against whom we have sinned, hath in His infinite love uttered unto us the thoughts of His compassion and His mercy; but God Himself is astonished at it, and commendeth His love.

IV. As the Sonship is the beginning of the Gospel, so it is also the end and purpose of God's message. God, speaking to us by His Son, shows unto us that we also are to become the sons of God. In the Son we know and have the Father: in the Son we also are the children of God.

A. SAPHIR, *Expository Lectures on the Hebrews*, vol. i., p. 20.

REFERENCES: i. 1-4.—*Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. ii., p. 460. i. 2, 3.—G. Calthrop, *Words to my Friends*, p. 1. i. 3.—G. E. L. Cotton, *Sermons to English Congregations in India*, p. 103; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 60. i. 3, 4.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. i., p. 119.

Chap. i., vers. 3-6

CHRIST above the Angels.

I. It is very wonderful how, in God's ways, fixed necessity and liberty go hand in hand. From all eternity Jesus is appointed the Son of David; but the development of history goes through liberty, the exercise of faith, of hope, of patience, of joy, of suffering. Everything that is human is in sweetest harmony with that unfailing and unchangeable purpose of God's love which must surely come to pass.

II. Humanity in the person of Messiah is exalted far above any creature. The consummation of all history, and the perfect manifestation of God's glory to the rejoicing adoration of angels and men, will be in the Lord Jesus, who is not ashamed to call us brethren, who is one with us by a link which can never be severed. Holiness and goodness are worthy of adoration only in their essence and source. He, whom holy angels are called by God to worship, must be essential holiness, goodness, love—must be none other but the infinite and eternal, the ever blessed and co-equal Son of the Most High.

III. How near is Jesus unto us, although He is high above us. This is the very reason why God has exalted Him; this is the reason why He is so high above everything, above all powers and dominions; that He who has all power and love may be visible and accessible; that every one may see Him and draw near to Him; that out of the lowest depths we may behold Him, and that from the utmost corner of the land we may cry unto Him and be saved. He is high above us, that looking unto Him, the Author and Finisher of faith, unto Him who through the Cross entered unto glory, seeing Him constantly above us, the Lamb in the midst of the throne, we may run with patience the race set before us.

A. SAPHIR, *Expository Lectures on the Hebrews*, vol. i., p. 70.

REFERENCES: i. 4.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p 60. i. 4-14.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 42; R. W. Dale, *The Jewish Temple and the Christian Church*, p. 23. i. 5.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. i., pp. 185, 297; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. v., p. 31; J. Vaughan, *Sermons*, 14th series, p. 149.

Chap i., ver. 5; ii., ver. 4.

WHY does the Apostle speak about the angels? He has shown from Psalm ii., from Psalm xcvii., from 2 Sam. vii., from Psalm cx., most clearly that the man Jesus is none other than

God, and that therefore in His humanity also He is highly exalted above all angels. But what is the point of the comparison? The argument is simply this: the old dispensation, the law, was given under the mediation and administration of angels. If Jesus was above angels, then His dispensation, the new covenant, His priesthood, are high above that of the law. Scripture often speaks of the angels. Note some of the doctrines which the Bible contains concerning them.

I. Human beings know nothing about angels, except what God pleases to tell them. Hence all that human poets have imagined about them is of no importance or value, unless it agrees with the record of the Divine Scriptures. And Scripture tells us of the angels only, as it were, incidentally.

II. Notice the multitude of the angels. "We have come to an innumerable company of angels." This innumerable multitude is a polity, a state. There are gradations in it, groups, orders, legions of angels. There are the cherubim and the seraphim, thrones and dominions. This kingdom is intimately connected with the kingdom of grace. When a sinner is converted the angels rejoice, and when Jesus comes again the angels will come with Him.

III. Angels are connected with all physical phenomena. Through the angels God carries on the government of the world. Glorious as the angels are, they are in subjection to Jesus as *man*; for in His human nature God has enthroned Him above all things. Their relation to Jesus fixes also their relation to us. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation?"

A. SAPHIR, *Expository Lectures on the Hebrews*, vol. i., p. 94.

Chap. i., ver. 6.—"And again, when He bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, He saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him."

CHRIST worshipped by Angels.

I. The first thing which the text teaches is that Christ is a proper object of Divine worship.

II. The text suggests another point—that the incarnation of our ever-blessed Lord affords a special call upon all in earth and heaven to ascribe unto Him the honour which is due unto His name.

J. N. NORTON, *Every Sunday*, p. 25.

REFERENCES: i. 6.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. i., p. 349; *Homilist*, vol. i., p. 38.

Chap. i., ver. 7.—"And of the angels He saith, Who maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire."

Angelic Life and its Lessons.

I. There is no proof of the existence of other beings than ourselves, but there is also no proof of the contrary. Apart from revelation, we can think about the subject as we please. But it does seem incredible that we alone should represent in the universe the image of God; and if in one solitary star another race of beings dwell, if we concede the existence of a single spirit other than ourselves, we have allowed the principle; the angelic world of which the Bible speaks is possible to faith. But we have fallen upon faithless times; and worse than the mediæval, who saw the glint of the angels' wings in the dazzling of the noonday cloud; worse even than the Greek, who peopled his woods with deity, we see only in the cloud the storehouse of rain to ripen our corn, and in the woods a cover for our pheasants. Those who see more have small cheerfulness in the sight; neither the nymphs nor the angels haunt the hills with us. The world is too much with us, and God too little. We cannot see the world which moves around us through the dust of the death in which we live. He who dwells in the cabin of the visible cannot see the infinite world of the invisible through the clay-built walls. Our life with nature has lost its beauty, its joy, its religion.

Note—

I. The relation of God to angelic life. The first thing we understand of the angels is, that in distant eternities God created them. Here we have the principle of the social life of God. He would not have a life which began and ended in Himself. His life consisted in giving Himself away, and finding Himself in all things. I don't say God could not, but He would not be alone. And this is the deep principle of all being. That which *is*, is that which gives itself away. That which lives, is that which lives in others. God would be dead were He to live for Himself alone, and we are dead when we live only to receive, when, folding the cloak of self around us, we cease to find our being in sacrifice of self.

II. Note, next, angelic life in relation to God. It is described as a life of exalted praise. Here we have a revelation of the life of heaven. Holiness, deepening day by day; sacred love and awe, increasing as the revelation of holiness advances, and the expression of these in ceaseless worship, ceaseless praise. Then will praise be perfect, for in us love will be perfect; our

voices, our unconscious aspirations, our whole life shall go forth in song to God, as the river goes forth to seek the ocean. The perfect life will be perfect joy.

S. A. Brooke, *Sermons*, p. 304.

References: i. 7.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. viii., p. 461. i. 7-9.—*Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 447. i. 8, 9.—*Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 295; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 179. i. 10-12.—*Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 181. i. 11.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. vii., p. 337. i. 12.—F. Armitage, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xii., p. 321; G. T. Coster, *Ibid.*, vol. xvi., p. 203. i. 13, 14.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 182.

Chap. i., ver. 14.—"Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"

Ministry of Angels.

I. The angels are ministering, *i.e.* worshipping, spirits; beings engaged in the perpetual liturgy of the glorious temple above. That temple has never wanted its worshippers. The solemn anthem of praise has never been silent there. It has not been broken and marred by sin. But in the next place, as there is a worship of angels above, so there is a ministry of angels in the world. Cardinal Newman has gone so far as to suppose that the whole visible creation is carried on in its minutest details by their agency. He would have us believe that there is not a flower, nor a ray of light, but conceals some spirit form, which gives it its lustre and its beauty. Every breath of air, and ray of light and heat, every beautiful prospect is, as it were, the waving of the robes of those whose faces see God in heaven.

We need not, however, accept such a hypothesis as this. It is too fanciful, and it is not really supported by Scripture; for the representation of the Psalmist, "Who maketh His angels winds," etc., does not really amount to more than this, that God gives His angels the swiftness, and the strength, and the invisibility of the winds, that He clothes His ministers with the all-pervading subtlety of fire. He thus employs them as His agents in carrying out His purposes in the world.

II. And what are these purposes? What has Holy Scripture taught us concerning the offices of angels? (1) First of all, they are represented as deeply interested in the work of human salvation. The mystery of redeeming love fixes their entranced and ardent gaze. They stoop down, as it were, from the golden battlements of heaven, seeking, if it may be, to fathom that love, "the length and breadth, the depth and height of the love that passeth knowledge." The angels, though of spiritual and not of fleshly nature, can sympathise with our low estate, can rejoice in

God's good will towards us. And hence, no doubt, it is that He declares those who confess Him before men, He will confess before the angels of God. (2) And we see a further proof of this, their relation to us, in their attendance upon our Lord in His earthly life. They came to Him as comforters and helpers of His human nature. When He died angels guarded His tomb, and were witnesses of His resurrection. And we know that when He comes again He will come in the glory of His Father and of the holy angels, and that the trumpet of the archangel shall awake the dead. (3) As it was with His human life so it is with ours. The example of the angels teaches us (*a*) the blessedness of a willing obedience, (*b*) a lesson of sympathy for those beneath us. Do not let us plead any difference of rank, or knowledge or power, in excuse of our neglect of one of the least of our brethen made like us in the image of God.

BISHOP PEROWNE, *Sermons*, p. 224.

ANGELIC Ministry.

The oblivion of great truths is sometimes the reaction of grievous errors. The man-worship of the Church of Rome has nearly obliterated from our calendar the name most conspicuous in New Testament female biography; and in the same way, in our protest against the angel-intercessors of angelic idols of popery, we are in danger of forgetting the existence or denying the ministry of angels altogether. Now creature-worship is bad, whether that creature be a man or an angel. But although, like all loyal subjects, angels desire to concentrate on their eternal King the worship of the universe, and although they refuse to usurp the place of the one Mediator, in their nature, their functions and their history, there is much to elevate our thoughts, and to reward our affectionate contemplation.

II. It is pleasant to think that there are beings created and intelligent, who have kept their first state amidst the decay of earthly beauty and of earthly goodness; it is a joy to remember that there is a created beauty which has never dimmed; a created love which has never known a chill; a created loyalty which has never received a shock, or been seen to falter. Amidst our slowness and stupidity it is pleasant to remember that God has servants who understand all His will, and who can execute each fiat; angels who fly swift as wind, and who, for ready apprehension and ever-burning ardour, are flames of fire. With our felt weakness and unworthiness, it is affecting to know that

these angels, so swift, so strong, so holy, minister to the heirs of salvation. Nor is it without solemnity to remember that much, if not all, of our conduct is open to the observation of angels. And although it might well be restraint of the incentive sufficient to remember, "Thou God seest me," we may find an occasional restorative to our sinking spirits, and a useful proof to our faltering resolution, in remembering that we are seen of angels also. J. HAMILTON, *Works*, vol. vi., p. 311.

REFERENCES: i. 14. — Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 277; R. L. Browne, *Sussex Sermons*, p. 255; *Homilist*, vol. iv., p. 165; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxiv., p. 255.

THE Ministry of Angels.

I. As to the existence of angels, the fact confronts us that there are such beings, above man in gradation, superior to man in mental and moral endowments, waiting upon God in the upper sanctuary, and obedient to His will. The belief in such existences can claim the highest antiquity. A few cavilling Sadducees raised a doubt about it; but as to others, the Jews believed it, Gentiles believed it, and in the sense of some tutelar genius over particular localities and provinces, the notion had a place in the creed of the whole heathen world.

II. What is our revealed knowledge concerning the angels? (1) Of the dignities and capacities of angels, Scripture gives us everywhere the most exalted ideas. (2) Their wisdom also is great. (3) They have made mighty advances in the sanctity and purity of the heavenly state. They are the elect, the everlasting chosen ones of God, confirmed in their state of blessedness in heaven, to go no more out, but ever loving and ever delighting to exalt His name.

III. What is the source of the interest which the angels take in us? (1) One reason is to be found in their general sympathy with Christ's work, and with the success of His mission in the hearts of men, as that which was to bring an access of numbers to their own blessed society, and magnify the power and grace of Him who was at once their Lord and ours. (2) Again, this pleasure of angels in ministering to us may arise in some degree from their superior knowledge of what man's place in the universe of God is, and how he ranks in the varied orders of created existence. (3) Know that Christ makes all things one. All diverging lines, whether of earthly condition, or diverse economies, or separated ages of the world, of this mansion or that, in the rest of paradise, and this task or that in the count-

less hierarchies of heaven, are all brought up into, and meet in this centre. The most exalted seraph draws the breath of his immortality from Christ, just as much as the newly departed infant whom he folds in his wing to lay in the bosom of Jesus, as privileged heir of salvation, gathered early from the toils of time.

D. Moore, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 3273.

Chap. ii., ver. 1.—"Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip" (or, "lest haply we drift away from them").

Drifting.

The influences against which we are warned by the words of my text are those of currents which are flowing just where we are, and which may operate so insidiously that we may not know of their effect until, perhaps, it is too late to resist their power. Of these currents I will specify three.

I. Take first the *age* current, or what a recent essayist, borrowing from the German, has called the "time-spirit." Every epoch has its own special tendency. These vagaries will pass away, even as the fleecy clouds remove from the summit of Mont Blanc; but Christ abides, like the grand old mountain, with its majestic mantle of stainless and eternal white. Hear Him, therefore. Hear Him, and keep fast hold of His sayings; so shall ye partake of His stability.

II. The second current to which I would refer is that of the place in which we dwell. Every city has its own peculiar influence. I do not hesitate to say that it is a less difficult matter to be an earnest Christian in some cities than it is in others. But the principles of the Gospel are not shifted by the tendencies of any place; and when we measure ourselves by them we may always discover how it is with us. Let us not take it for granted that because we are making some effort in the right direction, therefore we must be going forward. These efforts may not be enough to neutralise the forces of the current, and we may be drifting backward after all.

III. There is, thirdly, the *personal* drift—the drift in each of us individually. Let us not be self-confident here, or imagine that there is no fear of us. That imagination is itself the beginning of the personal drift. Distrust yourself, therefore, and trust only and always in the Lord. Anchor on to Christ; that is the sure preventive of all such drifting as I have been seeking to expose.

W. M. Taylor, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxii., p. 40.

References: ii. 1.—J. G. Rogers, *Christian World Pulpit*,

vol. xxvii., p. 361; Bishop Westcott, *Ibid.*, vol. xxxvi., p. 136; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. x., p. 83. ii. 1-4.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 183. ii. 3.—J. Natt, *Posthumous Sermons*, p. 425; *Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. iv., p. 207; 3rd series, vol. vi., p. 166; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. v., p. 300; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 185. ii. 3, 4.—Hay Aitkin, *Around the Cross*, p. 145. ii. 4.—W. M. Taylor, *The Gospel Miracles*, p. 173. ii. 5.—*Homilist*, vol. v., p. 1. ii. 5-9.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 122; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 325.

Chap. ii., vers. 5-10.

CONSIDER—

I. What it is that the Son of man, humbling Himself for us, hath endured. There are two expressions used—to suffer death and to taste death. Let us remember that between Jesus, as He was in Himself and death, there subsisted no connection. In Him Satan could find nothing. Death had no personal or direct relation unto Him. The Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of Life, of His own power and will, laid down His life. The death of the Lord Jesus in this respect is different from the death of any human being; it was the free, voluntary, spontaneous act of His will. When the Lord Jesus Christ died He put forth a great energy. He *willed* to die. And so in one sense we may say that His death was a great manifestation of His power.

II. Consider that the Lord *tasted* death. A man may die in a moment, and then he does not taste death. But all that was in death was concentrated in the cup which the Lord Jesus Christ emptied on the cross. He was made a curse for us; He was left alone with the power of darkness. But though He emptied the cup of wrath, though all the waves and billows of death went over Him, He continued to *live*, to trust, to love, to pray. He gained the victory in the lowest depth of His agony.

III. He tasted death by the grace of God *for every man*. We speak about the pardon of sins; *we* are pardoned, but all our sins have been punished. All our sins were laid upon Jesus, every one was punished. In the Cross there is not merely the forgiveness of sins, but there is the actual putting away of all our sins; and the Apostle explains to us that this great marvellous mystery of the death of Christ as our Substitute, bearing our sins, bearing our curse, enduring the penalty of our sins, and overcoming all our enemies (that is, the law of Satan and death), that this is in order to manifest unto us the fulness of the perfection of God.

A. SAPHIR, *Expository Lectures on the Hebrews*, vol. i., p. 118.

Chap. ii., ver. 6.—"But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the Son of man, that thou visitest Him?"

FAITH.

I. When man rises above the merely savage state, he begins to show some signs of faith; some evidences of his looking forward to a future; some reliance upon powers which are unseen. For, observe, the savage lives by his bow or his nets; the next step is to the pastoral or agricultural life. The shepherd must trust to the sun that warms and to the rains that moisten, and the ploughman must trust to the bounteous earth and the gracious season, and look forward to the harvest which promises, and guard against the scarcity which threatens. He begins, then, to show faith, and a firm conviction that he will have the good things he looks for, though the ripened grain and blessed harvest be as yet unseen.

II. As man advances in the scale of civilisation, this faith in the future goes on ever increasing; there is a more unselfish looking forward, a more far-reaching prudence, a desire to conciliate even a posterity as yet unborn. As men get nobler and wiser and holier they look further and further. According as a man is animated by a lofty purpose or a merely selfish one, so his view is wider and far-reaching, or confined and paltry; according as his faith in things hoped for is firm and unwavering, and his conviction of the reality of things unseen is deep and reverent, so is he ready to dare and suffer to the utmost in any way his faith requires of him. They that love God, the Unseen, must trust Him, must believe that He is; and they that seek Him humbly and devoutly, will find their faith in Him grow, and their love for Him increase, and so receive from Him ever a fuller and fuller assurance of their acceptance.

A. JESSOPP, *Norwich School Sermons*, p. 108.

REFERENCES: ii. 6.—T. B. Dover, *A Lent Manual*, p. 66. ii. 6, 7.—W. H. Dallinger, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxii., p. 360. ii. 6-8.—A. Rowland, *Ibid.*, vol. xx., p. 164; W. H. Dallinger, *Ibid.*, vol. xxxiv., p. 200.

Chap. ii., vers. 8, 9.—"Thou didst put all things in subjection under His feet. For in that He subjected all things unto Him, He left nothing that is not subject to Him. But now we see not yet all things subjected to Him. But we behold Him . . . even Jesus." (R.V.)

HISTORY is a succession of economies or dispensations, of which the Christian is the crown and completion. It follows on the

rest, realises all they designed, and embraces the whole future of the coming world. The threads of the ages have been woven in the great loom of Time with the weft of the Divine purpose and the ways of human experience, and on the web is traceable in clear characters the God-given sovereignty of man. In the world that is coming man is king. "All things shall be put in subjection to him," like captured slaves to the authority and use of their conqueror.

I. "Not unto angels has God subjected the coming world." Angels filled and crowded Hebrew thought for a long time, as God's "mighty ones," the swift-winged messengers who delighted to do His will; agents of deliverance, as for the imprisoned Peter, and of punishment, as for Sennacherib. "Ministering spirits sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation"; and thus they had aided the Jew in the explanation of the phenomena of life, and solved the more mysterious problems of supernatural and divine action. But not to these "men in lighter habit clad" had God subjected the coming world of manhood, the advancing goodness and perfecting character and service of the sons of God.

II. But if to man, to what man is this sceptre of dominion finally granted? To all and sundry, and to them all alike, simply as men, or to particular races or one race of men? To whom is the ultimate leadership of the world to be given? We believers are the heirs of the coming world, and belong to the meek who are now beatified with salvation, and destined ultimately to inherit and rule the earth. Not "the great white race," but the great Christian race rises to joint-heirship with Christ Jesus in the salvation, and service, and sovereignty of the future of humanity.

III. On this earth and amongst men—"we see Jesus"; and though, in seeing Him, our first glimpse may only confirm the impression that man has not yet fully entered on his inheritance; yet the deeper look assures us that he is on his way to it, has already been anointed with the oil of joy above his predecessors and contemporaries, and, though suffering, is really ascending by suffering to the throne from which He shall rule for evermore. "We see Jesus," Son of Mary, "man of sorrows," "made a little lower than the angels"; but "crowned with glory"; crowned, indeed, for sacrifice, but for the sacrifice which draws all men to Him, and wins them to loving and ardent loyalty to His authority, and makes them "kings and priests unto God." That sight explains the ages' long delay;

the dissolution and disappearance of the ancient and illustrious Jewish religion, and is the indefeasible pledge and guarantee that the sovereignty of man shall yet be realised, and all things be put under His feet. The Conqueror of Calvary shall take man's crown from the dust and put it on his head. The Redeemer from sin shall break the chains of man's long servitude, and lift him at once to freedom and power.

J. CLIFFORD, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xl., p. 241.

Chap. ii., vers. 8, 9.—"We see not yet all things put under Him. But we see Jesus."

MANHOOD crowned in Jesus.

The text brings before us a threefold sight.

I. Look around us. "We see not yet all things put under man." Where are the men of whom any portion of the Psalmist's words is true? "All are yours and ye are Christ's." If so, what are most of us but servants, not lords, of earth and its goods? We fasten our very lives on them; we tremble at the bare thought of losing them; we give our best efforts to get them—we say to the fine gold, "Thou art my confidence." We do not possess them, they possess us; and so, though materially we may have conquered the earth, spiritually the earth has conquered us. What then? Are we to abandon in despair our hopes for our fellows, and to smile with quiet incredulity at the rhapsodies of sanguine theorists like David? If we confine our new wealth—yes. But there is more to see than the sad sights around us. Looking around us, we have indeed to acknowledge with plaintive emphasis, "We see not yet all things put under Him"; but looking up, we have to add with triumphant confidence that we speak of a fact which has a real bearing on our hopes for men, "we see Jesus."

II. So, secondly, look upwards to Jesus. Christ in glory appears to the author of this epistle to be the full realisation of the Psalmist's ideal. What does Scripture teach us to see in the exalted Lord? It sets before us (1) a perpetual manhood; (2) a corporeal manhood; (3) a transfigured manhood; (4) sovereign manhood.

III. Finally, then, look forward. Christ is the measure of man's capacities. We too shall be exalted above all creatures,—far above all principality and power, even as Christ is Lord of angels. What that may include we can but dimly surmise. Nearness to God, knowledge of His heart and will, likeness to

Christ, determine superiority among pure and spiritual beings. And Scripture, in many a hint and half-veiled promise, bids us believe that men who have been redeemed from their sins by the blood of Christ, and have made experience of departure and restoration, are set to be the exponents of a deeper knowledge of God to powers in heavenly places, and, standing nearest the throne, become the chorus leaders of new praises from lofty beings who have ever praised Him on immortal harps.

A. MACLAREN, *Sermons in Manchester*, 2nd series, p. 170.

REFERENCES: ii. 8, 9.—R. Lorimer, *Bible Studies in Life and Truth*, p. 273. ii. 9.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xiii., No. 777; vol. xxv., No. 1509; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 213.

Chap. ii., ver. 10.—"For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."

LIFE ascending into Heaven.

I. At the moment that our blessed Lord was standing on the Mount of Olives, in the early morning, with a few faithful men around Him, and passed up into heaven in their sight, victorious, to begin His everlasting reign—at that moment the whole world lay in its many thousand years' sleep of sin, and knew Him not; at that moment Jerusalem stood with its great walls, strong and bright as usual, and the sentinel passed to and fro; and here in Britain, in the great forests and the wild wastes, the native tribes hunted and fought, all unconscious of the early dawn on the far distant Eastern hill, and the Lord of life beginning His reign. It is a fact of the very simplest kind, that the whole world has changed, and has become practically a new creation, since that hour of the ascension, and because of that hour. The conquering spirit of life now reigns. That is the great truth of this day, this ascension time.

II. And we need to be reminded of it, because of the other truth, which is part of it, that on this earth there is no triumph of truth, only a victorious working, always unfinished, always to the human eye, at its best, the little company on the hill, with a sleeping hostile world against them. Note the seed-like character of the life of the ascension. Its intense vitality wrapped up in a seed. How, at the very moment of victory, Christ ascending in triumph, Lord of all the worlds, is represented by a small company, at dawn of day, on a hilltop. Stand with Him, and look down on the sleeping world, and be not discouraged. You

are *not* overmatched. The smallest seed of life in your hearts will live and prevail. We serve the King of heaven, Christ ascended; He knows His own and their trials.

E. THRING, *Uppingham Sermons*, vol. i., p. 218.

CHRISTIAN Suffering.

I. Christian perfection does in some degree consist in, or rise out of, Christian suffering. Christian perfection is the working out of Christian character, up to the height of the Divine ideal. The means by which Christian character is to go on to that perfection is Christian suffering; for in order that you may have perfection, in order that your Christian character may be crowned, it must be consolidated by the acquirement of Christian virtues; and it is by the power of suffering that Christian virtues are acquired. (1) Christian humility, which is one of the very deepest, most fundamental, as well as most beautiful Christian virtues, is the result of Christian suffering. (2) Patience is also a result of suffering; the "trial of our faith" is to "work patience." (3) Courage is born of suffering. If we are to crown our Christian life with courage, it must be by Christian suffering.

II. If we are to go on to perfection, we require elevation of nature and purification of heart. What are the powers of purification and elevation? I answer, without the slightest fear of challenge, The power of separation, and the power of aspiration towards God; or, to put it in simpler language, the power of sacrifice and the power of prayer. (1) Prayer pre-eminently springs from suffering. If a man prays he lives. Once let the clouds come; once let us lose a friend whom we have loved; once let us stand face to face with the great revealer—Death; once let health give way, or circumstances change, or sorrows rain down upon us, then, *then* pre-eminently if we are Christians, we learn to pray. (2) Purification comes from a deep sense of immortality. Now that sense of immortality is deepened by suffering, for it is suffering that teaches us what this world is. It is suffering that brings the gayest, the most trifling to be real at last. Therefore it is suffering that helps to purify our lives.

III. Christian perfection comes from Christian suffering. Suffering in itself works no perfection. (1) If your suffering is Christian suffering, it must be willingly accepted for the love of God. (2) To suffer as a Christian is not only *that*; it implies also looking unto Him. To keep our eyes steadily fixed upon

the King of suffering is to see what suffering was, in God's life, as He came to bear sin in His human nature.

W. J. KNOX LITTLE, *Characteristics of the Christian Life*, p. 96.

REFERENCES: ii. 10.—H. Bushnell, *Christ and His Salvation*, p. 219; *Expository Sermons on the New Testament*, p. 256; C. J. Vaughan, *Lessons of the Cross and Passion*, p. 76; R. W. Dale, *The Jewish Temple and the Christian Church*, p. 57; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. viii., p. 144; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 326; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. viii., No. 478; C. Kingsley, *National Sermons*, p. 17; *Homilist*, vol. iv., p. 402; 3rd series, vol. i., p. 345; J. Oswald Dykes, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxi., p. 97. ii. 10-14.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. i., p. 418. ii. 10-18.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iii., p. 186.

Chap. ii., ver. 11.—"Both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren."

THE Mystery of Godliness.

I. Our Lord has the Divine nature, and is of one substance with the Father, which cannot be said of any creature. He it was who created the worlds; He it was who interposed of old time in the affairs of the world, and showed Himself to be a living and observant God, whether men thought of Him or not. Yet this great God condescended to come down on earth from His heavenly throne, and to be born into His own world; showing Himself as the Son of God in a new and second sense, in a created nature, as well as in His eternal substance. Such is the first reflection which the birth of Christ suggests.

II. And next observe, that since He was the All-holy Son of God, though He condescended to be born in the world, He necessarily came into it in a way suitable to the All-holy, and different from that of other men. He took our nature upon Him, but not our sin; taking our nature in a way above nature. He came by a new and living way, by which He alone has come, and which alone became Him.

III. When He came into the world He was a pattern of sanctity in the circumstances of His life, as well as in His birth. He did not implicate and contaminate Himself with sinners. He came down from heaven, and made a short work in righteousness, and then returned back again where He was before He came into the world; and He speedily left the world, as if to teach us how little He Himself, how little we His followers, have to do with the world. He could not rest or tarry upon earth; He did but do His work in it; He could but come and go. And while He was here, since He could not

acquiesce or pleasure Himself in the earth, so He would have none of its vaunted goods. When He humbled Himself to His own sinful creation, He would not let that creation minister to Him of its best, as if disdaining to receive offering or tribute from a fallen world. He came to it as a benefactor, not as a guest; not to borrow from it, but to impart to it. He who was so separate from the world, so present with the Father even in the days of His flesh, calls upon us, His brethren, as we are in Him, and He in the Father, to show that we really are what we have been made, by renouncing the world while with the world, and living as in the presence of God.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. v., p. 86.

Chap. ii., ver. 11.—"**He is not ashamed to call them brethren.**"

THE Brother born for Adversity.

I. The relation of a brother. What is the essential feature of this family relationship as compared with others, close and dear, which we sustain? Surely it is that father, mother, brother, sister, wife, child belong to us, are part of our very being; while in the same measure we belong to them. There is a oneness which precludes the idea of separate interests; interests, cares, sorrows, hopes, joys, are common. Our brethren are obeying the instincts of their own hearts, and seeking their own noble ends, in the sympathy and help they may extend to us. The sense of indebtedness hardly enters into the service on either side. The brother who helps, urges no claim in helping; the brother who is helpful, feels no debt but to love. It is a delight to them to undertake for us in our necessity. There then is an association, a relationship, which has an element of rest, of satisfaction in it, which no other known to man in this world offers; fairest type on earth of the relationships of that celestial state where love reigns supreme in the universal brotherhood, of which the Lord Christ is the Elder Brother, and the great Father is the Head.

II. It is precisely this relationship which by His Incarnation and Passion the Saviour claims. He seeks to give us a relation that we can rest upon; which will draw us by the bands of fraternal sympathy to His strength when we are weak, to His bosom when we are weary and long for rest. We have wearied God with our sins, we cry. The sense of the profound wrong we have done Him is the heaviest part of life's burden. There is that in man which is unable to repose in the naked idea, nay, even in the naked assurance of God. We want some natural

bond of union, some natural relationship in which we can rest. Hence the essential gladness of the glad tidings, "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

III. It is said in a passage of the Book of Proverbs that "a brother is born for adversities." That He might know our souls in adversities surely the elder Brother of the great human family was born in the human home, tasted all pure human experiences, and made Himself familiar with all forms of human pain. We are of His kindred, the brethren of Christ. It is no pity that moves Him to us; it is pure and perfect love. God is pleading His own cause in pleading against our sins. The battle which God is fighting in our hearts is the battle for which He made the great universe to be the theatre, and in which the devil's triumph would rob Him of His everlasting glory and joy.

J. BALDWIN BROWN, *The Sunday Afternoon*, p. 10.

REFERENCES: ii. 11.—*Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. iii., p. 102; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ix., p. 279; H. W. Beecher, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 199. ii. 11-13.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 453.

Chap. ii., vers. 11-18.

I. THE first truth which is brought before us in these verses is, that Jesus, who is not ashamed to call Himself brother, and us His brethren, is one with us. We who are sanctified by Him, and He who sanctifies, are of one. Christ is He who sanctifies. The source and power of sanctification are in Jesus the Son of God, our Saviour. He is the foundation, source, method, and channel of our sanctification. The Holy Ghost, the Comforter, is sent by Christ to glorify Him, and to reveal and appropriate to us His salvation. We are conformed to the image of Christ by the Spirit, as coming from Christ in His glorified humanity.

II. Jesus, by His experience, by His sufferings, and, above all, by His death, has become a merciful and faithful High Priest. We are now on earth, in the flesh, sin around and within us. How can the Holy God look on us, and grant us blessings? How can there be communion between heaven and earth? Jesus is ascended, and having put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, presents us to the Father, and we are holy and unblameable before Him, and Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are able to send down the fulness of blessings, of grace and strength; to have communion with us, notwithstanding all our sin and defilement. Christ is a merciful High Priest, not merely full of pity, compassion, and grace, but full

of sympathy. He is most lovingly and earnestly anxious that we should always obtain the victory, and suffer no injury; for having gone through all the conflict Himself, without a single moment's wavering or surrender, He wishes us to be found continually in Him, and to conquer continually. He is faithful in bringing down to us all the gifts of God; all the counsel, will, and blessings of the Most High; faithful in taking up to God all our need and trial; all our petitions, fears, and tears; all our sufferings, and all our works.

A. SAPHIR, *Expository Lectures on the Hebrews*, vol. i., p. 142.

Chap. ii., vers. 14, 15.

IN Bondage to the Fear of Death.

I. There is no real ambiguity in the passage before us, though it may appear so at the first glance, in the use of the word *death*. Our Lord is said, by means of death, to have destroyed him who has the power of death. On the first occasion of its use, death means of course the death of the body; the completion of the life of suffering which is in itself inchoate death. In the second instance, the death, of which the devil is the source and power, includes more, for it includes the death of the soul. But the Christian writers look upon death, whether that of the body or soul, as the victory of a power opposed to God. As God is the God, not of the dead, but of the living, so He is the God of life, not of death. Every one who has died since Adam has yielded to a conqueror, and confessed his power. It is the curse of sin, that only through defeat can we conquer. We watch a Christian deathbed, and see it calm and triumphant; but it is the triumph of a confidence that is in obedience to power; in submission is victory.

II. The fear of death is not connected with any special religion. It belongs to the constitution of our being. We are made to love life, and to shrink from annihilation. Christ died, not to remove the necessity of death, but to deprive it of its sting; to rob the grave of its victory. Death remains; the last enemy, whose defeat is not yet, but seen in the light of Christ's revelation, and encountered in His Spirit, its triumph is annulled. For the Christian's triumph over sin is the pledge and foretaste of his triumph over death. The resurrection of the soul is earnest of the resurrection of the body. Death is a curse still; but we are no longer slaves to it when once we feel the stronger arm on which we may lean, the rod and staff which are at hand to comfort. And we may feel that He who has

power to kill the body is welcome to the victory, since Christ has obtained for us the salvation of the soul.

A. AINGER, *Sermons in the Temple Church*, p. 87.

REFERENCES: ii. 14.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. iv., No. 166; *Ibid.*, *Morning by Morning*, p. 111; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii, p. 273; Bishop Westcott, *The Historic Faith*, p. 59. ii. 14, 15.—*Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xviii., p. 3; F. Lawrence, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxvi., p. 267; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p 454. ii. 14-16.—*Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. iii., p. 109. ii. 14-18.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 249. ii. 15.—*Ibid.*, vol. xiv., p. 43.

Chap. ii., ver. 16.—"**For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels but He took on Him the seed of Abraham.**"

CHRISTIAN Sympathy.

I. We are all of one nature, because we are sons of Adam; we are all of one nature, because we are brethren of Christ. The thought of Him, "the beginning of the creation of God," "the first-born of every creature," binds us together by a sympathy with one another, as much greater than that of mere nature as Christ is greater than Adam. All those common feelings which we have by birth are far more intimately common to us now that we have obtained the second birth—One thing needful, one narrow way, one business on earth, one and the same enemy, the same dangers, the same temptations, the same afflictions, the same course of life, the same death, the same resurrection, the same judgment. All these things being the same, and the new nature being the same, and from the same, no wonder that Christians can sympathise with each other, even as by the power of Christ sympathising in and with each of them.

II. Nay, and further, they sympathise together in those respects, too, in which Christ has not, could not have gone before them—I mean in their common sins. We have the same gifts to sin against, and therefore the same powers, the same responsibilities, the same fears, the same struggles, the same guilt, the same repentance, and such as none can have but we. The Christian is one and the same, wherever found; as in Christ, who is perfect, so in himself, who is training towards perfection; as in that righteousness which is imparted to him in fulness, so in the righteousness which is imparted to him only in its measure, and not yet in fulness. We are much more like each other, even in our sins, than we fancy. Perhaps the reason why the standard of holiness is so low, why our

attainments are so poor, our view of truth so dim, our belief so unreal, our general notions so artificial and external, is this, that we dare not trust each other with the secret of our hearts. If it be awful to tell to another in our own way what we are, what will be the awfulness of that day when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed? Now, though there be shame, there is comfort and soothing relief; though there be awe, it is greater on the side of him who hears than of him who makes avowal.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. v., p. 116.

REFERENCES: ii. 16.—J. Vaughan, *Fifty Sermons*, 8th series, p. 163; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. ii., No. 90; *Homilist*, 1st series, vol. vi., p. 264; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. x., p. 151. ii. 16-18.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 455.

Chap. ii., ver. 18.—**"For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted."**

I. THE Divine Son of God, before His incarnation in our flesh, was in His own personal being separate from the sons of men. The counsels of infinite love resulted in His becoming the Saviour of the world—of that world whereof man was the head and lord. It pleased Him, in His amazing condescension, to plant Himself in the root of our human nature, which had fallen from God and from love. We all see and know how necessary this was. But we do not, perhaps, so often reflect upon the necessity which there was, that He should take upon Him human infirmity, and trial, and suffering, for a reason that sprang, not so much from Divine as from human requirements. He knew, he felt, as a Creator, all that we suffer. But one link was wanting to bind Him to us—in fact, a gulf of vast extent lay yet between us—He had not undergone these things; we had undergone them. He can now be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, not merely because, as our God, He knows them,—and not one pang of the suffering heart is hidden from Him—but for more, because, as our brother, He has Himself felt them; has been a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.

II. Christ's temptation was His training for our help in temptation. Not only does He know our frame, and remember that we are but dust, but each trial of our faith and constancy finds a vibrating chord in His personal being. His temptation was His training, and it is our help. Do you find Christ not sufficient for your day of temptation? It is because your view of Christ wants enlarging and deepening. But this is not all. Christ is

not a fact but a Person. Study the character and acts of Jesus, but with a view to know not only more about Him, but more of Himself, by personal communion.

H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 84.

THE Efficient Sympathy of Christ.

I. The Suffering. (1) It was personal suffering. This is impressively indicated by the use of the word Himself. (2) It was positive and most painful suffering. (2) In all its reality, variety, and extent, it bore the special character of temptation.

II. The Succour. (1) This succour is accompanied with the truest sympathy. Our knowledge of temptation or trial is measured by our personal endurance of it. (2) This succour is imparted with the utmost promptitude. (3) This succour is conveyed in the form of actual deliverance, or effective relief, or, at least, adequate support.

E. THOMSON, *Memorials of a Ministry*, p. 264.

REFERENCES: ii. 18.—J. Irons, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 377; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. ix., p. 487; *Ibid., Evening by Evening*, p. 279; A. Rowland, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxvi., p. 246; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 89; vol. x., p. 78; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. vi., p. 153.

Chap. iii., ver. 1.—**"Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus."**

THE Study of Jesus.

I. The Person of Christ is the great miracle and mystery of the universe enshrined in the Christian faith; and that is the object which we are invited perpetually to contemplate. "Wherefore, holy brethren," signifies the lifting of a veil from before an august Being, who has been already described in His two natures, though their union has not been described, but is taken for granted. Our Lord is the central object of our profession. He Himself tells us that the bond of perfectness in our religion is devotion to His own Person. After having brought into a new and most marked prominence the supremacy of the love of God, as occupying all the heart, and soul, and mind, and thought, He demands literally the same all for Himself. There is a specific Christian grace that has no name in the New Testament, which is derived from the impress of the Redeemer on the heart and life. Be sure you aspire to this, or, rather, think nothing of aspiring to it; look at Him much, and His image will steal irresistibly into your nature and form and life.

II. The office of Christ is here dwelt upon. He is the Apostle and High Priest of our profession. There is to us no person of Christ without His work; the personal Emmanuel is in the background; but the ministry of Jesus Christ fills up the whole visible horizon of thought. We are all in the school of Jesus, and, however busy we may be, like Martha, we must find time, like Mary, to sit and behold, and study the Master.

III. But the study of Christ is not yet exhausted; there remains the habitual consideration of the supreme faithfulness of our common Master. It inspires boundless trust in all the brethren of the Christian profession who keep their eyes fixed on Him who is its High Priest. Looking to Him, and considering His faithfulness, we at once see the perfect Example, and feel the Divine energy flowing from it into our souls.

W. B. Pope, *Sermons and Charges*, p. 101.

I. We have here one great comprehensive command: "Consider Christ." Now that word "consider" implies in the original an earnest, fixed, prolonged attention of mind. Our gaze upon Christ is to be like that of a man who resolutely turns away his eyes from other things to fix them, with keen interest and eagerness, with protracted, steady look, on something which he is resolved to learn thoroughly. (1) The first remark that I would make, then, is the very simple and obvious one—that a Christian man's thoughts should be occupied with his Saviour. (2) But, still further, our gaze on Him must be the look of eager interest; it must be intense as well as fixed. (3) Still, further, another requisite of this occupation of mind with Christ and His work may be suggested as included in the word. Our consideration must be resolute, eager, and also steady or continuous

II. Notice the great aspects of Christ's work which should fix our gaze. (1) He is the Apostle of our profession. He is sent forth from God, and brings God to us. He, and He alone, He, and He for ever, He, and He for all, is the sent of God. (2) Then we are to think of Him as our High Priest. "As Apostle," it has been well said, "He pleads God's cause with us; as High Priest He pleads our cause with God." The Apostolate and the Priesthood of Christ are both included "in the one word—Mediator." The idea of priesthood depends upon that of sacrifice, and the idea of sacrifice, as this epistle abundantly shows, is incomplete without that of expiation.

III. Notice, finally, the great reasons for this occupation of mind and heart with Christ our Mediator. (1) Our relation to

Christ, and the benefit we derive from it, should impel us to loving meditation on Him. (2) The calling of which we are partakers, should impel us to loving meditation. (3) The avowal which we have made concerning Him should impel us to loving, steadfast contemplation.

A. MACLAREN, *Sermons in Manchester*, p. 289.

Chap. iii., ver. 1.—"Consider the High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus."

CHRIST our Priest.

Christ our Victim is slain. His blood is poured out on the cross. The cross and the earth are sprinkled with that blood. He Himself, as our Priest, is baptized with it. And when that sacrifice was accomplished He, our High Priest, went up with the marks of the sacrifice upon Him, the same Jesus, into the presence of God, there to plead the merits of His blood for us. And we are waiting, as the people waited without on that day of atonement, for Him to come forth—to return again to bless us with the glorious effects of that His atonement, even everlasting salvation. Now in this, the principal work of Christ's priestly office, there are several minor particulars, all of interest as further explaining and setting it forth.

I. Note the qualifications for the office, and His fulfilment of them. (1) All bodily freedom from blemish did but faintly set forth the purity and spotlessness of the Lord Jesus. (2) Our High Priest was harmless, undefiled. (3) He was separated from sinners. (4) He is a merciful High Priest, full of sympathy, knowing how to compassionate and to succour them that are tempted and led out of the way.

II. Note the efficacy and finality of the High Priesthood of Christ. In the poured out blood of Jesus we have all that we can want—pardon, acceptance, renewal unto righteousness. We have all we want, and we therefore want no more. His everlasting priesthood is enough for us. That He is in heaven, appearing for us, makes all human mediators vain and needless. That He has offered Himself for us makes all other sacrifices valueless. Every believer, however humble, is a priest unto God; a priest of the tabernacle which God built, and not man, to offer up the sacrifice of thanksgiving, even his body, soul, and spirit, consecrated and devoted to God's service.

H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. vi., p. 145.

REFERENCES: iii. 1.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. i., p. 103. iii. 1-4.—J. W. Brown, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxii., p. 4.

Chap. iii., vers. 1-6.

CHRIST the Lord, and Moses the Servant.

I. To speak of Moses to the Jews was always a very difficult and delicate matter. It is hardly possible for Gentiles to realise or understand the veneration and affection with which the Jews regard Moses, the servant of God. All their religious life, all their thoughts about God, all their practices and observances, all their hopes of the future, everything connected with God, is to them also connected with Moses. Moses was the great apostle unto them, the man sent unto them of God, the mediator of the Old Covenant; and we cannot wonder at this profound, reverential affection which they feel for Moses.

II. After admitting fully the grandeur and excellence of Moses, the Apostle proceeds to show us the still greater glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. The zeal of Moses was not free from earth-born elements, and had to be purified. But there was nothing in Jesus that was of the earth, earthy; no sinful weakness of the flesh was in Him who condescended to come in the weakness of sinful flesh. His love was always pure, His zeal holy, His aim single. Moses spake face to face with God, and was the mediator between God and Israel. The Lord Jesus is Prophet, Priest, and King, in one Person; but He is perfectly and eternally the true Revealer, Reconciler, Ruler, and the Son of God. Moses was willing to die for the nation; the Lord Jesus actually died, and not for the nation only, but to gather all the children of God into one. Moses brought the law on tables of stone; the Lord Jesus, by His Spirit, even the Holy Ghost, writes the law on our hearts.

A. SAPHIR, *Expository Lectures on the Hebrews*, vol. i., p. 167.

REFERENCE: iii. 1-6.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 456.

Chap. iii., ver. 1, etc.—"Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus."

I. THE High Priest was one taken out of the people, and bound to the people by ties of the closest and most intimate kind. It might have been otherwise. This important official might have been a stranger introduced into the nation from an alien source; or he might, although being a Jew, have occupied a position of such complete independence and isolation as should have placed him almost in antagonism to the rest of the community. Such was the case of the priestly caste in other countries. But with

the Jews the Divine method of constructing the ecclesiastical system, secured the most perfect identification of the man who was at the head of it with the feelings and sympathies of the rest of the people. We observe, also, as another result of the Divine arrangement, that all the Israelites, drawn as they were towards a single person, were reckoned before God as being *in* the High Priest. The man who stands there in the sanctuary, arrayed in his gorgeous robes, is not to be regarded as a mere individual,—is not to be looked upon as merely one out of many, though one above the many, and distinguished from the many, by superior dignity and higher privileges ; but he is the head, in whom the whole nation is included, and involved, and gathered, and summed up before God. It was, for instance, as including in himself the entire mass of the nation, that the High Priest on the day of atonement had to enter into the most holy place with the blood of sprinkling, and afterwards to confess the sins and iniquity of the people over the head of a living goat.

II. Now in all this we have a lively and striking portraiture of the position which the Lord Jesus Christ, the great antitype of the Jewish official, occupies with respect to the blessed company of faithful people. The Lord Jesus is the ideal man. If you turn to the Jewish high priest you find that he was what every Jew was intended to be. The Lord Jesus alone possesses complete perfection of human character. But He is very much more to us than the pattern man. He does much more than exhibit to us in His own person what a king and a priest unto God ought to be. He is also, if I may so express myself, the inclusive man ; He is the great Head, in whom His people are gathered, and summed up, and presented before God. If St. Paul teaches us anything by his writings, he teaches us this, that the entire spiritual community, the whole body of the faithful in Christ Jesus, are reckoned by God as being gathered and summed up, involved, included, represented in Christ before the throne of God. And this, in its Christian form, is precisely what, in its Jewish form, the Israelite was taught by the existence of such a personage in the state of the Jewish high priest. The ordinary Israelite, if he were a spiritual and a thoughtful man, would look with longing desire upon the unbroken communion which the High Priest, by virtue of his office, maintained with God. So the Spirit of Christ maintained an unbroken communion with His Father in heaven. This characteristic of His earthly life is still more characteristic of

His resurrection life, in which He is, in a special manner, the High Priest of our profession.

G. CALTHROP, *Penny Pulpit*, new series, No. 495.

REFERENCES: iii. 1-19.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 250. iii. 6-14—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 378. iii. 7.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xx., No. 1160; *Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. iii., p. 46.

Chap. iii., vers. 7-19.

UNBELIEF in the Wilderness.

I. The history of the wanderings of the Israelites in the wilderness is most instructive. No Scripture is of private interpretation, but is Catholic and eternal. Israel's history in the wilderness is typical throughout. (1) It is a *marvellous* history from beginning to end. (2) It was a history of solemn and glorious privileges. Is not this a picture of the Christian's life? (3) It is a sad history, full of fearful judgments. Do you understand the parable?

II. Unbelief prevented Israel's entering into the Promised Land. Then it follows that faith enters into the rest. "Believe with thy heart," is the great lesson of the chapter. Only believe, only worship, only harden not your heart, when in the Scripture, and in the Spirit's teaching, and in God's daily dealings you hear God's voice; and, though wild beasts, hunger and privation, weakness and temptation, beset you, you are safe, you are blessed. God is with you; who can be against you? Angels are around you, and you can give thanks, for you are more than conquerors, through Him that loved you and gave Himself for you.

III. Yesterday is the past of sin and misery. To-day is the present of Divine grace and man's faith. To-morrow is eternity, full of joy and glory. To-day is the turning-point, the crisis, the seedtime. To whom can we go but unto Jesus Christ, with the past of our transgression, with the yesterday of the first Adam, with the to-day of our weakness and need, with the for ever of our endless destiny? He is Jehovah, the Saviour God, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Cleaving to Him, we rest in mercy, which is from everlasting to everlasting.

A. SAPHIR, *Expository Lectures on the Hebrews*, vol. i., p. 188.

REFERENCES: iii. 7-19.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 457. iii. 12.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 281. iii. 13.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 249; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xi., No. 620. iii. 14.—*Ibid.*, vol. xviii., No. 1042; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vii., p. 13.

Chap iii., ver. 16.—"For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses."

THE Warnings of Advent.

The true translation of these words is this: "For who were they, who, when they had heard, did provoke? Nay, were they not all who came out of Egypt with Moses?" So far from meaning that some and not all did provoke, He lays a stress on the universality of the evil.

I. There is something striking in the season of the natural year at which we celebrate the beginning of another Christian year. It is a true type of our condition, in which all the changes of our lives steal upon us, that Nature, at this moment, gives no outward signs of beginning; it is a period which does not manifest any striking change in the state of things around us. The Christian spring begins ere we have reached the half of the natural winter. Nature is not bursting into life, but rather preparing itself for a long season of death. And this is the type of a universal truth: that the signs and warnings which we must look to must come from within us, not from without; that neither sky nor earth will arouse us from our deadly slumber unless we are ourselves roused already, and more disposed to make warnings for ourselves than to find them.

II. If this be true of Nature, it is true also of all the efforts of man. As Nature will give no sign, so man cannot. There is no voice in Nature, no voice in man, that can really awaken the sleeping soul. It is the work of a far mightier power, to be sought for with most earnest prayers for ourselves and for each other; that the Holy Spirit of God would speak and would dispose our hearts to hear; that so being wakened from death, and our ears being truly opened, all things outward may now join in language which we can hear; and Nature and men, life and death, things present and things to come, may be but the manifold voices of the Spirit of God, all working for us together for good. Till this be so we speak in vain; our words neither reach our own hearts nor the hearts of our hearers; they are but recorded in God's book of judgment, to be brought forward hereafter for the condemnation of us both.

T. ARNOLD, *Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 157.

Chap. iii., ver. 18.—"And to whom sware He that they should not enter into His rest, but to them that believed not?"

THE Hardening Influence of Sin.

I. Sin has distinctly this effect, that while it makes repeated

sin more easy, it makes repentance more difficult. It makes sin, in a measure, the obvious beaten path where our own footsteps are stamped for a precedent. They lie there before our eyes; we repeat ourselves. We have less scruple in sinning today than we had yesterday; we find it easier to sin again than it was to sin once; we sin now with a relish where we sinned before with a pang. This is what Holy Scripture calls hardening the heart. This is the way in which the deceitfulness of sin works within us. It conveys, as it were, a bribe to the judgment, an opiate to the conscience; we have learned what it were better for us not to have known, viz., that a sinner may be let alone by God's judgment to pursue his way unmolested. It is a fearful thing to be thus initiated into the mystery of ungodliness, ever working grosser deceit within.

II. As was the first step of man from purity to sin, so is, in a lower degree, every first step. True, we have no upright nature to debase, we have no untainted spirit within us to corrupt; yet the grace of God has done much for us, has set us on a pinnacle of vantage. Every time we resist a temptation we make that vantage more easy to keep. Every time we yield we forfeit a position which of itself was a preservative. You are members of Him from whom radiate and to whom rally all the pulses of the spiritual life. The will fixed on Him tends to fix itself yet more intently, to be set and rooted in Him. That was the best security you had. For He worketh in you, both to will and to do, of His good pleasure. All this you may strengthen yet more by the entrenchments of habit. Then there will go on a process gradually building up a result, each day, each hour adding something; like the massive reefs of coral, which are the result of the deposits of a worm.

H. HAYMAN, *Rugby Sermons*, p. 199.

REFERENCES: iii. 19.—H. Jones, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxv., p. 404; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 281. iv. 1.—E. D. Solomon, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvii., p. 195. iv. 1, 2.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xx., No. 1177. iv. 1-13.—R. W. Dale, *The Jewish Temple and the Christian Church*, p. 81.

Chap. iv., vers. 1-11.

FEAR and Rest.

I. The worldly man neither fears nor loves God. He sometimes imagines he loves God, because he is not afraid, because he is not awed by the holy majesty of God, and does not tremble at the righteous condemnation of the law. The soul which is

roused and convinced of sin fears God. This fear, created by the Spirit, has in it already, though concealed and feeble, elements of trust and affection. There is in it, as there is in repentance, a longing after the peace of God, a desire to be brought into harmony and fellowship with Him. There is in this fear, although dread and anxiety about self may predominate, reverence, conviction of sin, sorrow, prayer.

II. It is because we know the Father, it is because we are redeemed by the precious blood of the Saviour, it is as the children of God and as the saints of Christ, that we are to pass our earthly pilgrimage in fear. This is not the fear of bondage, but the fear of adoption; not the fear which dreads condemnation, but the fear of those who are saved, and whom Christ hath made free.

III. The believer has *rest*, now on earth, and afterwards in glory. Resting in Christ, he labours to enter into the perfect rest of eternity. We enjoy rest in Christ by faith. But the perfect enjoyment of rest is still in the future. There remaineth a sabbatism for the people of God. Believers will enter into rest after their earthly pilgrimage, labour, and conflict, and the whole creation will share in the liberty and joy of the children of God. The substance and foretaste of this rest we have even now in Christ. But as Christ has entered into glory, so we are to be glorified together with Him at His coming. Then will be perfectly satisfied the great and deep-seated longing of our hearts for rest.

A. SAPHIR, *Expository Lectures on the Hebrews*, vol. i., p. 209.

REFERENCES: iv. 1-13.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 315; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 459. iv. 2.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. vii., p. 205; Bishop Jackson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 497. iv. 3.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xv., No. 866; *Homilist*, 1st series, vol. v., p. 38. iv. 5.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 112.

Chap. iv., ver. 9.—"There remaineth therefore a rest (Sabbatism) to the people of God."

THE Earthly Sabbath: a Type of the Heavenly.

I. The heavenly blessedness is Sabbath blessedness, because it includes rest. The fundamental idea of the Sabbath is rest; and this is the idea which the Apostle makes most prominent in this place, because he uses Sabbatism, interchangeably with the word which signifies cessation or repose. But it can never be granted that mere physical or animal rest was the sole or even chief thing enjoined by the Sabbath law under any dispensation. It was the rest of man in God, a rest like that of God, a

rest which in man's unfallen state was enjoyed by his working on the same plan and resting in the same spirit with God, and in his fallen state could only be recovered by his return in his whole being to harmony with God, and rest in Him. There is rest (1) from sin; (2) from sorrow and pain; (3) from labour and fatigue.

II. The heavenly blessedness is Sabbath blessedness, because it includes commemoration. From the beginning the Sabbath had a memorial character. Heaven will not be a mere repetition of the creation Sabbath, nor of the creation enlarged and endeared by such a providential sign or memorial of deliverance as made up the Exodus or Canaan Sabbath of the Old Testament. Nor will it be a mere repetition or prolongation of the resurrection Sabbath of the Christian Church. It will stand in the same relation with that Sabbath of the new creation, in which the Exodus Sabbath did to that of the old as from the first; this wonderful ordinance finds room for the oldest memories and for the most recent. Like some great pillar carved with successive inscriptions, or shield quartered with various arms, the Sabbath adds on, and yet loses nothing, so that the heavenly sabbatism enriches itself with all the spoils of the past.

III. The heavenly blessedness will be Sabbath blessedness, because it includes worship. The worship of the heavenly Sabbath will be distinguished (1) by gratitude; (2) by sympathy; (3) by consecration.

J. Cairns, *Christ the Morning Star*, p. 325.

References: iv. 9.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. iii., No. 133; *Ibid.*, *Morning by Morning*, p. 18; A. Barry, *Cheltenham College Sermons*, p. 74; G. E. L. Cotton, *Sermons to English Congregations in India*, p. 168; Bishop Barry, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxi., p. 321; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 77.

Chap. iv., vers. 9, 10.

Entrance into God's Rest.

We have here:—

I. The Divine rest: "He hath ceased from his own works, as God did from His." (1) Rest belongs necessarily to the Divine nature. It is the deep tranquillity of a nature self-sufficing in its infinite beauty, calm in its everlasting strength, placid in its deepest joy, still in its mightiest energy; loving without passion, willing without decision or change, acting without effort, quiet and moving everything; making all things new, and itself everlasting; creating and knowing no diminution by the

act; annihilating and knowing no loss, though the universe were barren and unpeopled. The great ocean of Divine nature which knows no storm nor billow is yet not a tideless and stagnant sea. God is changeless and ever tranquil, and yet He lives, wills, and acts. (2) There is the thought here of God's tranquil ceasing from His work, because He has perfected it. (3) This Divine tranquillity is a rest that is full of work. Preservation is a continued creation.

II. The rest of God and Christ is the pattern of what our earthly life may become. Faith, which is the means of entering into rest, will, if only you cherish it, make your life no unworthy resemblance of His who, triumphant above, works for us, and, working for us, rests from all His toil.

III. This Divine rest is a prophecy of what our heavenly life shall surely be. The heaven of all spiritual natures is not idleness. Man's delight is activity. The loving heart's delight is obedience; the saved heart's delight is grateful service. Heaven is the earthly life of a believer glorified and perfected. If here we by faith enter into the beginning of rest, yonder through death with faith, we shall enter into the perfection of it.

A. MACLAREN, *Sermons in Manchester*, vol. i., p. 291.

REFERENCES: iv. 11.—E. Cooper, *Practical Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 301; *Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. iv., p. 211; *Homiletic Magazine* vol. xiii., p. 111; E. Paxton Hood, *Dark Sayings on a Harp*, p. 369.

Chap. iv., vers. 12, 13.—"The Word of God . . . with whom we have to do."

LIFE a Dialogue.

There is a Word of God to us; there is also a word of ours to God. The Divine word and the human. The word which speaks, and the word which answers and makes reply.

I. The Word of God. There are many such words. There is a word of God in nature. There is a word of God in providence. There is not sound only, but a voice in both of these; a voice implying a personality, and a voice presupposing an auditor. If the definition of "word" is intelligence communicating itself, here twice over is a word of God, and here is an ear to which it makes appeal. The word was a voice before it was a book. The living life wrote itself upon other lives; they, in turn, wrote it upon others, ere yet a page of gospel Scripture was written, on purpose that the distinction between letter and spirit might be kept ever fresh and vital; on purpose that the characteristic of the new revelation might never fade or be

lost sight of, how that it is God speaking in His Son—God speaking, and God bidding man to make reply.

II. There is also a word of ours to God. The particular point in the view of the holy writer was that of accountability. God speaks in judgment, and we speak to give account. "With Him" directly and personally "we have to do." The two words of which the text speaks are not independent words. This conversation is not between two equals, either of whom must contribute his share to the instruction and the enjoyment of the meeting. The incommensurableness, in nature and dignity, of the two speakers, while it forbids not freedom in the inferior, forbids presumption, nay, precludes it as a tone and a feeling which it would jar upon, and jangle out of tune the very melody and harmony of the converse. The word of the man meets the word of his God on the strength of the Word made flesh, which is the reconciler and the harmoniser of the two. "I looked, and behold, a door opened in heaven, and a voice saying to me, Come up hither!"

C. J. VAUGHAN, *University Sermons*, p. 546.

Chap. iv., vers. 12-16.

I. THE Word of God judges the Christian below. We are familiar with the Word of God. Like Israel, we possess the treasure in our country, in our families. Do we know that in possessing, reading, and knowing the Scriptures we are under a mighty, solemn and decisive influence, and that this Word judges us now, and will judge us at the last day? The Word is (1) living. It is the seed which appears insignificant, but which, if received in good ground, shows its vitality. Hence it is that by this Word souls are born again into eternal life. (2) The living Word is powerful and energetic. It springs up and grows while men are unconscious of its operation. It grows and energises in our thoughts and motives; it brings forth fruit in our words and actions; it impels to exertion, it sustains in trial. (3) The Word cannot be living and energetic without being also a sword, dividing and separating, with piercing and often painful sharpness, that which in our natural state lies together mixed and confused. Without a solemn awe and trembling at the Word of God, there is no true rest in Christ.

II. The Word judges us on earth, and we are humbled; the Lord Jesus represents us in heaven. He intercedes for us, He sympathises with us. We look from earth and self to the sanctuary above, and find there nothing but love, grace,

sympathy, and fulness of blessings. He is our great High Priest. In the sanctuary of blessedness and glory Jesus, who was tempted in all things as we are, apart from sin, is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He remembers His earthly experience; He knows our frailty, the painfulness of the conflict, the weakness of the flesh. We are upheld according to His lovingkindness, according to the multitude of His tender mercies. Justified by His blood, we are now much more abundantly saved by His life. Our great High Priest in the highest glory is our righteousness and strength; He loves, He watches, He prays, He holds us fast, and we shall never perish.

A. SAPHIR, *Expository Lectures on the Hebrews*, vol. i., p. 232.

REFERENCES: iv. 14.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxiii., p. 229; *Ibid.*, vol. xxx., p 65; *Ibid.*, *Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 89; G. E. L. Cotton, *Sermons and Addresses in Marlborough College*, p. 115; W. Cunningham, *Sermons*, p. 284.

Chap. iv., ver. 15.—"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

THE Sympathy of Christ.

I. Few persons are aware of the extent to which the mind is influenced by sympathy. It may be doubted whether there was ever anything done in the world, greatly bad or greatly good, which did not owe itself, in part, to sympathy. When the ignorant multitude led in the meek and lowly man of Nazareth through the waving palms, with their unwearied "Hosannas!" till the excitement spread from street to street, and even children to the temple's gate cried back, "Hosanna!" no person can question but that the popular fervour owed its rise, in a great measure, to no higher principle than sympathy. And when, four days afterwards, the very same voices, with rival fury, shouted, "Crucify Him!" it was little else than the same principle in another dress. And we all know, in the smallest circle, if you took away sympathy how little would be the sum of joy or sorrow that would remain; while, if but two kindred minds are left to act and re-act upon each other, there is scarcely the height of moral happiness, or the depth of moral suffering, to which both will not unconsciously arrive. On all sides there is nothing insulated in man. Now the gospel comes in to take hold of this deep and all-pervading principle of our nature, and to give it a higher and nobler reach.

II. When our blessed Lord, in His sojourn here, had gathered round His own heart all the trials, and all the infirmities, and all the tendernesses of man, then did He ascend into heaven, that He might carry them with Him to the throne of God. His ascension severed none of His sympathies. Every cord of brotherhood remained perfect between the Church and Christ.

III. It is not without a particular emphasis that, in immediate connection with this mention of Christ in His sympathy as the High Priest of His people, it is added that He was "yet without sin." Two thoughts lie in these words. The one is the qualification for sympathy. And here we would observe, that sympathy can never be separated from virtue. So that for the perfect sympathy there must be entire innocence. But in the mention that our sympathising Saviour was "without sin," we are taught that there is not only a qualification, but also a limit to His sympathy. It is evident that in the highest sense of the word we can sympathise only in that of which we have had experience. Christ in the flesh had experience of the consequence of sin, but not of the acts of sin: He bore an imputed guilt, but a real punishment.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 1874, p. 63.

THE Sympathy of Christ.

Christ's sympathy with penitents is perfect, because He is sinless; its perfection is the consequence of His perfect holiness. And for these reasons:—

I. First, because we find, even among men, that sympathy is more or less perfect, as the holiness of the person is more or less so. There is no real sympathy in men of a sensual, worldly, unspiritual life, unless we are to call that inferior fellow-feeling which ranks with our natural instincts, and is to be found also in the lower animals, by the name of sympathy. Sin is essentially a selfish thing. We may almost measure our advance in the life of God by the tenderness of our feeling towards sinners. And if we may venture to dwell on thoughts beyond our probation, may we not believe that this law prevails to perfect the mutual sympathy of those who are in the higher state of separation from this evil world? Of all the members of Christ's mystical body, they must mutually sympathise most perfectly who are most free from the taint of evil.

II. And from this our thoughts ascend to Him who is all-perfect; who, being from everlasting very God, was for our

sakes made very man, that He might unite us wholly to Himself. Above and beyond all sympathy is that of our High Priest. It stands alone in its incommunicable perfection. Let us see how we may draw comfort from this thought. Those who have sinned may go to Him in a perfect confidence that He is able to be touched with a feeling of their infirmities. We have something in Him to which we may appeal. (1) We may plead with Him on His own experience of the weakness of our humanity. (2) We may appeal to His experience of the sorrow and shame which come by sin upon mankind.

III. Lastly, let us so live as not to forfeit His sympathy. It is ours only so long as we strive and pray to be made like Him. Love of the world casts out the love of Christ.

H. E. MANNING, *Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 179.

Chap. iv., ver. 15.—"In all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

I. THE soul of man in this passage through the years of time, which is the preface, the ante-chamber, the school, the exercise-ground of an eternal existence, has to go through temptation. Man comes into life fitted and equipped to meet his trial, to meet temptation, as he comes fitted and equipped to provide for his bodily wants, to subdue the earth, to live in society, to develop and improve the marvellous endowments of his nature. The soul comes with reason, with conscience, with knowledge, with will, with grace; and as the day goes on the question is ever presenting itself, How shall it use that great gift of will? The beginning of the history of the first man, the prelude and figure of what was to follow, was the history of a trial, a temptation, a defeat. The first scene in the victory of the Second Man was a temptation, a victory, the type and firstfruit of what man might hope for. The Bible opens with man ensnared and vanquished; it closes with the great sevenfold promise to him that overcometh, and with the vision of the glory of those who overcame. And what is all that is written in it, between the first page and the last, but the record of how, to men and to nations, there came the day of opportunity, the day of visitation, the day of proof, and how that day was met, and how they bore themselves in it, and what were its issues?

II. What we see in the great lives in the Bible finds place in the most commonplace of our modern lives. He was "in all points tempted like as we are." We may turn the words round, and say with all reverence that like as He was tempted, so are

we, even the humblest among us, tempted, tried, according to the measure of what we can bear, but as truly and with all depending on the issue. The hour is coming which must soon decide it—betray, make manifest, what has been going on, not only in the great storms of adversity and passion, those great critical decisions of will for or against what is right, to which we often confine the name of temptations, but in those secret, undisclosed, prolonged workings of choice, of effort, of self-surrender, which prepare men for what they do in public, and which are as real and serious as what they do in public. We rise in the morning, and the day will try us, show what we are, touch some spring, some dormant motive deep down in our nature which reveals the truth about it to one who sees us; and as we go through each day's proof and trial, we are fitting ourselves for the event of the trial of to-morrow, and the current of our life and character is set by unperceived and insensible influences either towards that eternal life which God has prepared for man, or towards that eternal death from which, for the soul, there is no rising.

R. W. CHURCH, *Penny Pulpit*, new series, No. 704.

REFERENCES: iv. 15.—S. Martin, *Sermons*, p. 157; J. R. Macduff, *Communion Memories*, p. 194; C. Stanford, *Central Truths*, p. 122; S. Rawson, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 192; *Ibid.*, vol. x., p. 409; W. Landels, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iii, p. 321; *Ibid.*, vol. iv., p. 312; H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, vol. xii., p. 88; *Ibid.*, vol. xiv., p. 77; *Ibid.*, vol. xv., p. 67; *Ibid.*, vol. xxviii., p. 422; J. B. Heard, *Ibid.*, vol. xx., p. 120.

Chap. iv., vers. 15, 16.

THE Sympathetic Saviour.

We have here—

I. Christ's power of sympathy asserted. Sympathy was the heritage which earth gave Him to enrich His heavenly state.

II. The conditions guaranteeing the power. (1) His exposure to temptation. Just as the light becomes tinged with the hues of the glass it passes through, so the unfathomable love of the Son of God becomes sympathetic towards men as it passes to them through the human heart, steeped in sorrow and agonised by the sufferings of the Son of man. Christ's exposure to temptations gave His love the quality of sympathy. (2) The other condition of His power of sympathy was His freedom from sin, notwithstanding His exposure to its temptations. The temptations of our Saviour were no shams. He was tempted like as we are. His temptations were as real to Him as ours are to us. Temp-

tations to sin are of two kinds, direct and indirect; the first being solicitations, and the second provocations to sin. Christ endured both kinds. It is a belief with the people of the district that the River Dee passes through the whole length of Bala Lake without mingling with its waters. Its current, they affirm, can be clearly traced, marked off by its clearer, brighter waters. So Christ's life, passing through the lake, so to speak of earthly existence, is clearly defined. It is one bright, holy, spotless stream from beginning to end—a life without sin. The dark waters of temptation and sin pressed round Him; but such was the force of will and power of holiness by which He was characterised, that not a drop was permitted to mingle with the pure stream of His life. He passed through unsullied.

III. Christ's power of sympathy used as an encouragement to seek the blessings provided for us. The writer notifies (1) the blessings we are urged to seek—"mercy and grace in every time of need." (2) The place whence they are dispensed—"the throne of grace." (3) The spirit of confidence in which, in view of the assurance furnished to us of Christ's power of sympathy, these blessings should be sought. The boldness is the confidence inspired by a living, all-absorbing conviction of the deep and yearning sympathy of Him who occupies the throne. With such an assurance, surely any shrinking hesitancy to come and seek is unreasonable and sinful. The word rendered *boldly* here may, with equal propriety, be rendered *joyfully*. So, then, we are right to seek mercy and grace with joy. The Christian man should come with joy to draw the grace which is to quench his soul-consuming thirst, and sustain the Divine life quickened by the Divine mercy in his soul.

A. J. PARRY, *Phases of Christian Truth*, p. 233.

Chap. iv., ver. 16.—"Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace."

I. WE have here the idea of majesty. God is seated upon a throne. His estate is royal. To Him belongs kingly authority. He is to be approached as a monarch, with reverence and worship. The royal majesty of Jehovah rests not only on His power, but still more on His perfection, especially His moral perfection.

II. We have here the idea of sovereignty. The sovereign occupant of a throne acts not of constraint, nor merely as limited by law or promise, nor always as his subjects may desire or request; but in proportion as he is a sovereign he acts according to his own conclusions as to what is wise, and right, and befitting. Absolute sovereignty cannot safely be trusted to a

creature. But to God absolute sovereignty belongs. In coming to God, then, we must bear in mind that we are coming to a sovereign.

III. We have here the idea of wealth or abundance. Plenty beseems the royal estate. Wealth properly surrounds a throne. Riches and honour are the fit appurtenance of a crown. In this respect the throne of God has its due accompaniment. To Him belongs the wealth of the universe. His kingdom ruleth over all. It is the privilege of the believer to remember this when he approaches God in prayer.

IV. We have here the idea of liberality or bountifulness. Great wealth does not necessarily imply great beneficence. It is only where the possessor is of a kind and generous spirit that his wealth becomes a blessing to others. Now in this respect God commends Himself to our admiring and grateful confidence. His generosity is as boundless as His wealth. Let us cultivate just views of God as at once a King and a Father—a King almighty and glorious, and a Father full of compassion and tenderness.

W. LINDSAY ALEXANDER, *Sermons*, p. 287.

REFERENCES: iv. 16.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xvii., No. 1024; R. Glover, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 88; H. W. Beecher, *Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 143; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. ix., p. 329. v. 1, 2. —H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxiii., p. 229.

Chap. v., vers. 1-10.

CHRIST, as Son of man, called and perfected to be our High Priest.

I. The Jewish priesthood suffered from two essential defects, and was thus only a type and shadow of our Lord. (1) In the first place, the priests were as sinful as the people whom they represented. (2) The mediator ought not merely to be a perfect and sinless man, he ought also to be Divine, in perfect and full communion with God, so that he can impart Divine forgiveness and blessing. Only in the Lord Jesus, therefore, is the true mediation. And now that He has come and entered into the heavenly sanctuary as our High Priest, the word priest in the sense of sacerdotal mediator dare never be used any more.

II. The two qualifications of the Aaronic high priest, that he was from among men, and that he was appointed by God, were fulfilled in a perfect manner in the Lord Jesus. (1) The Aaronic high priest could have compassion on his fellow sinners, knowing and feeling his own infirmities. But this compassionate, loving regard for the sinner can exist in perfection only in a sinless one.

The purer and higher the character, the quicker its penetration, and the livelier its sympathy. (2) Christ glorified not Himself to be made a High Priest. This is Christ's glory, even as it is the reward of His suffering, that in Him we draw near unto the Father, and that from Him we receive the blessings of the everlasting covenant. He rejoices to be our High Priest. God called Him to the Priesthood. The glory of Christ is the result of His obedience, and the fruit of the experience of earth through which He went is His perfect sympathy with us, and His all-sufficient grace, which is able to uphold us in every trial, and to carry us safely through all our conflicts, and present us unblamable in body, soul, and spirit before the Father.

A. SAPHIR, *Expository Lectures on the Hebrews*, vol. i., p. 253.

REFERENCES: v. 1-11.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 36. v. 2.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxiv., No. 1407.

Chap. v., ver. 7.—"And was heard in that He feared."

IRREVERENCE.

"Was heard," the Greek text says, "from His reverence."

I. Irreverence is the not fearing, the not being awed into silence, the not bending of the knee, of the soul before Him in whom we live and move and have our being. And we see this evil spirit everywhere. We have seen it in the open profaneness of the scoffer at holy things. We have seen it in the insolent defiance of the "busy mocker," who asks, "Who is the Lord?" and "Where is the promise of His coming?" We can trace it, if we will look for it, in the lurking-dens of the heart, in the chambers of the imagery. Every movement of the mind concerning Providence, concerning duty, concerning revelation, is an irreverence if God is not remembered in it.

II. Whence comes this irreverence? It is easy to tell of some particular instances which assist, if they do not create, the irreverence of which we are speaking. (1) The first of these is levity. "They made light of it," says the Gospel. There was nothing which they could not twist into a subject for jesting. (2) A second ingredient in irreverence is vanity. A man must be humble who would be devout. The first condition of reverence is humility. Where this is not, vainly shall we look for the prayer, vainly for the acceptance, of Him who was heard in that He feared. (3) A third of these counter-actions of reverence is excitement.

III. The battle against irreverence is one of detail. It is

only by attention to particulars that it can be won. (1) Be reverent in worship. (2) Be reverent in speech. It is bad to have bad thoughts; it is worse to utter them. Worse, because then they infect others. Worse, because then we use speech, which is man's glory, for the very purpose of doing God dishonour. (3) Be reverent, finally, in thought. There is a grace which we sometimes fear is dying out—could any grace quite die out?—in the Church of this latter day; and this is the grace of meditation. It is out of such communing that reverence springs, the worship of reverence and the speech of reverence, and the soul of reverence too. Without it there is no root to our religion; the growth is all outward; the world scorches it; "in the time of temptation it falls away."

C. J. VAUGHAN, *University Sermons*, p. 145.

REFERENCES: v. 7.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 84; *Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. i., p. 97; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 92; G. Matheson, *Moments on the Mount*, p. 204.

Chap. v., vers. 7, 8.

THE Humiliation of the Eternal Son.

The chief mystery of our holy faith is the humiliation of the Son of God to temptation and suffering, as described in this passage of Scripture.

I. The text says, "Though He were a Son." Now, in these words, "the Son of God," much more is implied than at first sight may appear. We have, perhaps, a vague general notion that they mean something extraordinary and supernatural; but we know that we ourselves are called, in one sense, sons of God in Scripture. Moreover, we have heard, perhaps, that the angels are sons of God. In consequence, we collect just this much from the title as applied to our Lord, that He came from God, that He was the well-beloved of God, and that He is much more than a mere man. But when the early Christians used the title, "the Son of God," they meant, after the manner of the apostles when they used it in Scripture, all we mean in the creed, when, by way of explaining ourselves, we confess Him to be God from God, Light from Light, Very God, or True God, from True God.

II. The text goes on to say, "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered." Obedience belongs to a servant, but accordance, concurrence, co-operation, are the characteristics of a Son. Christ took on Him a lower nature, and wrought in it towards a will higher

and more perfect than it. His suffering, temptation, and obedience must be understood not as if He ceased to be what He had ever been, but having clothed Himself with a created essence, He made it the instrument of His humiliation: He acted in it, He obeyed and suffered through it. Before He came on earth He had but the perfections of a God; but afterwards He had also the virtues of a creature, such as faith, meekness, self-denial. Before He came on earth He could not be tempted of evil; but afterwards He had a man's heart, a man's tears, and a man's wants and infirmities. He possessed at once a double assemblage of attributes, Divine and human. Till we contemplate our Lord and Saviour God and man as a really existing being, external to our minds, as complete and entire in His personality as we appear to be to each other, as one and the same in all His various and contrary attributes, "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," we are using words which profit not.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 156.

REFERENCES: 7-9.—R. S. Candlish, *The Fatherhood of God*, p. 353. v. 7-10.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxxii., No. 1927.

Chap. v., ver. 8.—**"Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered."**

SUFFERING the School of Obedience.

I. In His wisdom and power, God has laid even upon sorrow the destiny of fulfilling His purposes of mercy. In the beginning sorrow was the wages of sin, penal and working death; by the law of Christ's redemption it is become a discipline of cleansing and perfection. God permits it still to abide in His kingdom, but He has reduced it to subjection. It is now changed to be a minister, not more of His severity than of His mercy. It is the discipline of saints, and the safest, though the austerest, school of sanctity; and that because suffering, or, as we are wont to say, trial, turns our knowledge into reality. When pain searches into the body or the spirit we feel as if we had awoke up to know that we had learned nothing really until now. All general truths speak to us with a particular meaning, and speak to us with a piercing emphasis.

II. Sufferings so put our faith on trial as to strengthen and confirm it. They develop what was lying hid in us, unknown even to ourselves. And therefore we often see persons, who have shown no very great tokens of high devotion, come out under the pressure of trials into a most elevated bearing.

This is especially true of sickness and affliction. Not only are persons of a holy life made to shine with a more radiant brightness, but common Christians, of no note or visibleness, are changed to a saintly character. They wrestle with their trial, and will not let it go without a blessing; and thereby the gifts which lie enwrapped in a regenerate nature are unfolded into life and energy.

III. Once more: nothing so likens us to the example of Christ as suffering. The sorrows of the holiest minds are the nearest approaches to the mind of Christ, and are full of a meaning which is dark to us only from its exceeding brightness. And therefore, when we look at the sufferings of pure and holy minds, let us rather stand in awe, as being called to behold, as it were, a shadow of our Redeemer's sorrows. Even with bleeding hearts and deep-drawn prayers for their consolation, let us try to believe that God is endowing them with surpassing tokens of love, and with pledges of exceeding glory.

H. E. MANNING, *Sermons*, vol. i., p. 287.

REFERENCES: v. 8.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 89. v. 9.—*Ibid.*, *Sermons*, vol. xx., No. 1172; E. Cooper, *Practical Sermons*, vol. i., p. 143. v. 10.—J. Edmund, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 200. v. 11-14.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 37.

Chap. v., ver. 11—vi., ver. 3.

GROWTH in Grace and Knowledge.

I. The comparison between a newly-converted man and a babe is, like all comparisons, imperfect. For, in one sense, a Christian is born by the Holy Ghost full-grown, as Adam came into the world a perfect man. The babe in Christ learns very easily and very rapidly. He delights in the Word; he is humble and tender; he does not resist truths which condemn the flesh and correct our waywardness; he is unworldly, heavenly-minded, and nine-tenths of the Bible become clear when we are willing to deny ourselves, and take our cross and follow Jesus.

II. It is not that there is a higher truth or life for the older Christians. There are no doctrines more profound than those which are preached when Christ's salvation is declared, and to which they who are more advanced are admitted, as to an esoteric wisdom. All our progress consists in learning more fully the doctrine which at first is preached unto us. The strong meat, the doctrine of Christ's high priesthood in Heaven, is also milk, pure and nourishing, simple, and only received by

the childlike heart; whereas pride and ambition often call speculative and unprofitable discussions strong meat, though they are of no use to the spiritual man, but minister only unto strife and the exaltation of the flesh.

III. The Christians were to show (1) repentance from dead works and faith towards God. (2) The doctrine of baptism and of the laying on of hands is given. (3) Intimately connected is the doctrine of resurrection and eternal judgment. The germ of all truth is contained in these elementary doctrines. There is a simplicity which is the result of full and profound knowledge, of varied experience and conflict; a simplicity which is the indication of abundance and depth, which is the result of meditation, prayerfulness, and a humble walk with God.

A. SAPHIR, *Lectures on Hebrews*, vol. i., p. 278.

REFERENCES: v. 12-14.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 282. v. 14.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. ix., p. 506; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xii., p. 301. v. 17-20.—*Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. iv., p. 515.

Chap. vi., ver. 1.—"Leaving the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on into perfection."

THESE words are a guiding and inspiring principle, alike in the life of the whole Church and in our individual souls.

I. The unlimited going on to perfection is the law only of a life that is spiritual, "hid with Christ in God." In all that is material, the law is of alternate growth and decay; life springs out of death, and death out of life; nor less over all the institutions of humanity, so far as they belong only to the outward world, the same law reigns. They have their day, short or long, of growth, maturity, and decay, and then they cease to be. Only what is spiritual in them—the truth which they have taught, the beauty which they have created, the right which they have embodied in their institutions, the undying influences of their example and teachings—remains to be treasured up in the greater wealth of the future.

II. If there is life, there must be growth. The cessation of progress is necessarily the beginning of decay. There should be progress (1) in our knowledge of God and Christ; (2) in our moral nature; (3) in the inner life of devotion; (4) in the struggle against sin.

III. Is there not something of weariness and bewilderment in the realisation of this ceaseless duty of advance? Not for

a moment can we yield to it without degrading the higher instincts of humanity, without being untrue to the faith of Christ. There is a goal of perfection, but not here. For the individual soul there is the bliss of that perfect communion with God which we call Heaven. For the Church of Christ there is the second coming of the Lord, which is the consummation of all good, and the presentation to Him of the glorious Church—the Church triumphant. Far away the light of this perfection shines, like some bright star, on the troubled waters of life. Far away, but sure and certain, it is infinite in glory, and for it we can be content to wait.

A. Barry, *First Words in Australia*, p. 179.

References: vi. 1.—H. P. Liddon, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 7; *Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. ii., p. 601; S. A. Brooke, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 280; F. Wagstaff, *Ibid.*, vol. vi., p. 136; H. Phillips, *Ibid.*, vol. x., p. 155; *Ibid.*, vol. xvi., p. 363; H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, vol. xxx., p. 65; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 354. vi. 1-3.—Archbishop Benson, *Boy Life*, pp. 302, 320; C. Stanford, *Central Truths*, p. 1.

Chap. vi., vers. 4-6.

The Renewal of Those Who Fall Away.

The words of the Apostle in the text are very strong and very startling, and I can easily believe that they have often caused pain and misgiving to Christian minds.

I. I conceive that in the text the Apostle is speaking of no less a sin than that of utter apostasy from the Christian faith. The whole tenor of the epistle indicated an anxiety in the writer's mind lest those to whom he was writing should be deceived as to the greatness of their privileges as Christians, and should be led to despise them. And if he had this fear, is it any wonder that he should speak very plainly and boldly concerning the spiritual danger which those persons incurred who had been baptised, and who fell away?

II. Allowing this, however, we are perhaps still inclined to think a passage harsh which declares it impossible for a person who has fallen, no matter into what sin it may be, to be renewed unto repentance. There is no such thing in the world, which Christ redeemed with His own most precious blood, as a human soul who may not be saved from the wrath of God if only he be willing to be saved; and if in any case there is an impossibility, it is an impossibility of man's own making, and not one arising from the decree of Him who wills not the death of a sinner. The Apostle did not mean to imply that God would

mark with unavoidable damnation those who had apostatised from the faith of Christ once professed; but he did mean to warn his disciples that apostasy involved such an awful fall, resulting as it did, and casting shame upon the sacred sufferings of Christ, holding up with ridicule to the scoffing enemies of our Lord that cross whereby they professed to have been saved, that any one who did so turn his back upon Christ would find, to his cost, that to return to the place from which he had fallen would require little short of a miracle. Impossible it would not and could not be to God, but practically so improbable was it that any one who so fell would ever rise again, that it was only charitable to speak in the strongest terms imaginable of the danger incurred, and the consequent necessity of steadfastness in the faith.

HARVEY GOODWIN, *Parish Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 368.

FALLING Away from Christ.

There is no passage in the whole Bible of which the cruel enemy of souls has taken so much advantage as this. Tertullian tells us, that because of these verses the Church at one time rejected the whole Epistle to the Hebrews, and denied its inspiration, so fearful and so contrary to the general spirit of God's words did they consider them. And at this moment it would be affecting to count up all the real children of God who are being made absolutely miserable, and who are in danger of letting go all their confidence and all their hope, simply because of these terrifying words.

I. Let us endeavour to distinguish between what it is to "fall" and what it is "to fall away." To fall is to pass into a state of sin after we have once known the grace of God. And it is of two kinds. Sometimes it is a gradual declension, an almost imperceptible shading off into a cold, prayerless frame of mind. When Christ is not in the heart, and the heart is not in Christ—that is a fall, a deep, dangerous fall. That was the fall of Laodicea. Sometimes a fall is a rapid rush down a precipice into an act, or even into a habit, of positive sin. That was David's fall. Now God forbid that we should hide or extenuate the amazing peril of either of these two states; for both lie in the road which leads on ultimately to reprobation. But still, in neither of these states has the soul yet fallen away.

II. To fall away is to go on in sin till you let Christ go altogether. It is to cease to acknowledge Him to be a Saviour at all. It is to be in the state of deadly hatred to Jesus Christ

that we would rather He did not exist; and if we had the opportunity, we could do exactly what the Jews did, so hateful is He to us. To fall is to offend God; to fall away is to abandon God. To fall is to sin, and be unhappy; to fall away is to sin and be happy. To fall is to leave Christ; to fall away is to forsake Him for ever. To fall is accompanied with a secret hope and wish and intention to come back again; to fall away is to be resolute that you will never return. To fall is the act of a deceived heart; to fall away is the perversion of the whole man. To fall is guilt; to fall away is apostasy.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 5th series, p. 125.

REFERENCES: vi. 4-6.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. ii., No. 75; T. B. Dover, *A Lent Manual*, p. 149.

Chap. vi., vers. 4-20.

EXHORTATION.

I. The danger of apostasy. The Hebrews had become lukewarm, negligent and inert; the Gospel, once clearly seen and dearly loved by them, had become to them dim and vague; the persecution and contempt of their countrymen, a grievous burden under which they groaned, and with which they did not enjoy their fellowship with the Lord Jesus. Darkness, doubt, gloom, indecision, and consequently a walk in which the power of Christ's love was not manifest, characterised them. What could be the result but apostasy? Forgetfulness must end in rejection, apathy in antipathy, unfaithfulness in infidelity. The whole Church of God, as an actual, outward and visible community, even the innermost circle of Apostles, and still more the innermost sanctuary—the heart of the chosen believers—must be constantly kept in the attitude of humble watchfulness, and we must continually remember that faith is in *life*.

II. The children of God are born again of incorruptible seed, and they can never die. They that believe in Jesus, who really, and not in word only, trust in the Saviour, are born of God, and they cannot sin, because the seed of God abideth in them. The severe rebuke of the Apostle ends in words of strong encouragement. Fulness of hope is to characterise the believer. To look unto Jesus only, to see Him as our light and life, our righteousness and strength, is the fulness of faith; and to wait for the fulfilment of the promises at the coming of our Lord Jesus is the fulness of hope.

A. SAPHIR, *Lectures on Hebrews*, vol. i., p. 308.

REFERENCES: vi. 5.—H. Batchelor, *The Incarnation of God*, p. 297;

A. K. H. B., *Graver Thoughts of a Country Parson*, 3rd series, p. 261; C. Sheldon, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 87; F. W. Brown, *Ibid.*, vol. xvi., p. 236; J. Morgan, *Ibid.*, vol. xx., p. 186.

Chap. vi., ver. 6.—"They crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh."

I. Various as have been God's dealings with the world, there is, after all, a terrible impartiality in His dispensations to His rational creatures. He can hear us all in the same court, and judge us out of the same books. He can see through the intricacies of His own diversified government. He can estimate every district and age of the world by the standards appropriate to each. And while the human nature of the Church is uniform, its trials must be nearly so. If we are not nailed to a cross with one apostle, we are, with every disciple of Christ, bound to carry a cross daily. When Christ was about to die He instituted a memorial sacrament of His passion, to show forth His death until He come. It would seem that there is, as it were, a fearful and satanic sacrament too of that same dread hour, by which it is still in man's power to reiterate and prolong His death until He comes to judge the long succession of His crucifiers. St. Paul delivers unto us the tremendous truth that there is in man a continued capacity of crucifying afresh the Son of God; a power to act over again all the scene of His torture, to league with the malignant priests and the scoffing soldiers to buffet the unresisting cheek, to bind the crown of thorns.

II. It must indeed be conceded that the crime to which St. Paul specially ascribes this fearful character is a peculiar one, and, in its full extent, not ordinarily exemplified. He speaks of deliberate apostasy from the faith of Jesus. But there is no one characteristic of direct and utter apostasy which does not, in its own degree, belong to those daily desertions of the cause of Jesus which ally the miserable votaries of the God of this world with the avowed enemies of Christ in every age. There are the apostasies of the social table, of the fireside and the market place, the refined apostasies of our own modern and daily life, as real as the imperial treachery of a Julian, or the cold-blooded abandonment of a Demas. To every one of these the same impress belongs: it may be branded more or less deeply, but it is branded on all; they are all alike rife with the spirit of Caiaphas' council-chamber; they are all echoes of the voice that cried aloud, "Crucify Him, Crucify Him!" The tragedy of Golgotha has many actors: every generation, every land reiterates these multiplied crucifixions. Be assured that

the man who rejects Christ now, when He is formally recognised by high and noble, would have been much more certain to have joined in crucifying Him in Judea.

W. Archer Butler, *Sermons Doctrinal and Practical*, 1st series, p. 49.

References: vi. 6.—J. Irons, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 163; C. J. Vaughan, *Lessons of the Cross and Passion*, p. 283. vi. 9.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. iii., No. 152. vi. 9, 10.—A. Rowland, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxii., p. 219. vi. 9-20.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 555; R. W. Dale, *The Jewish Temple and the Christian Church*, p. 124. vi. 10.—R. S. Candlish, *Sermons*, p. 307; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxi., p. 392. vi. 11.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 282.

Chap. vi., ver. 12.—**"That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."**

Indolence.

I. It can never be unnecessary to dwell upon the warfare of sloth in the body. Better any diligence than any sloth. Better the strenuous idleness of bodily exercise than the sluggish, purposeless lounging which is the alternative for many. Not even that absorption of the faculties in bodily energy, not even that devotion of precious hours to interests which perish with the using, is so fatal to faith as the stagnation of all the powers in a dull, monotonous idling. Do you ask why this meanest of all sloths—the sloth of the body—should be called a foe particularly of faith? I answer, without hesitation, First, because it is expectant of nothing; and, secondly, because this kind of sloth is peculiarly friendly to vices which are murderers of faith. These men are the plague-spots of society; in low life they fill its gaols, in higher life they secretly stain our very feasts of charity.

II. The charge, "That ye be not slothful," applies to minds also. There is in almost all of us a proneness to inattention. The eye passes over the line, reaches the foot of the page, arrives in due course at the end of chapter and volume, and nothing remains of it. There is also a general dreaminess and listlessness and vagueness. Often excess in study will account for this. Many a man is slothful in business just from over-business; just because he has not been (in the Christian sense) fervent also in spirit, serving the Lord.

III. Let us turn, then, to that kind of indolence of which the Apostle actually wrote this warning: "That ye be not slothful." We observe sloth (1) in dealing with Divine truth; (2) in the exercise of Divine communion; (3) in the

region of Christian action. "God is not unrighteous," so runs the passage, "to forget your work and labour of love. And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence unto the end. That ye be not slothful." It is thus, by a diligent, earnest continuance in well-doing—in other words, in a life of active charity—that the departed saints are to be imitated.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *University Sermons*, p. 126.

I. WHAT is inherited? The promises. What promises? These must be the final promises, the promises which are embodied in the one word heaven. Many promises are fulfilled to us on our way there; but these are promises whose fruition is postponed till after death. What promises are fulfilled then in heaven? What is it that the Christian may, without fear or doubt, expect to find when he opens his eyes amid the scenes of the future world? (1) Freedom from sin. This at least. This, if there be nothing more; and this will be a great and glorious heaven in itself, for it will be a soul brought into harmony with itself and with its God and Saviour. (2) Another promise assures us of the end of sorrow. (3) Knowledge.

II. The conditions upon which the inheritance is secured. "Faith and patience." By faith. This is the key which opens the door of salvation to every one of us. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." We begin to live when we begin to believe. The first act of faith is like the first throb of the heart, or the first heaving of the lungs—it shows that there is life. But if faith unlock the door of salvation, it is not to be thrown away when once the door is opened. It is not merely a key, it is a principle which must abide with us for ever. The promises seem so manifold, so vast, so comprehensive, so royal, so infinitely surpassing our deserts, that they seem far too great and too good to be true. And we require faith in order to make our way to the perfect enjoyment of the promises. For it is only by bringing into view Christ and His love, the cross and its sufferings, heaven and its joys; in short, by bringing into view the powers of the world to come, and holding them in view, that we can overcome the present world. (2) But faith must have as her companion patience. This we must have, for as yet the blessing tarries. But if we have faith, we can well afford to have patience; for the end on which our heart is set is sure. It is hard to be patient when you

know not whether you will ever reach your aim. There is something distressing about all labour and suffering when the result is dubious. How patient the mariner can be amid storm and calm if he knows that he will reach the haven at last. How patient the sufferer on his sick-bed if he knows that recovery will come at the end of all his pangs. And the Christian has a certainty before him, and if he hopes for it, then doth he with patience wait for it.

E. MELLOR, *In the Footsteps of Heroes*, p. 248.

THE tone of this verse, the graces which are chosen, faith and patience, the reference to those who are now in full possession of the promises, all show that it is addressed to those who are, or have been, passing through sorrow.

I. And these bereaved or afflicted ones are, above all others, enjoined not to be slothful. The word, which is a very strong one in the original, answers accurately to another word in our language, "dull." It implies a great difficulty of being moved, an inertness. Sorrow is, in its first stage, a thing which has very often much of the nature of excitement. The mind is high wrought. It resolves everything; it intends everything; it feels an extraordinary acuteness from that impassioned state; there is sure to be, some time or other, a reaction. Nature takes vengeance, and repays herself, for the inordinate demand which has been made upon her by a corresponding heaviness. The spirit, which was so ecstatic, can now scarcely lift itself. The whole world is tame and flat. There are many passages of mind through which persons go who are under affliction, one after another, and one stage is sure to be a stage of indolence. It is the most dangerous of the stages. Therefore God is so urgent with the afflicted ones—with afflicted churches, with afflicted believers—to be active—strenuously active. Of all the remedies for sorrow, next to the highest, the greatest is work.

II. Two points are held up for imitation in the blessed dead. The one is that by which they first obtained an interest in the promises, and the other is that by which they carried it on, "faith and patience." Do you ask me how these glorified ones have travelled so well, and arrived so safe in their quiet resting-places? I answer, They accepted, in all its simplicity, the pardon of their sins through the blood of Christ. They had their losses, but they took them gladly. They had their long hill to climb, but they treated it manfully. And so with them

every word of God came true. Let us live as those that have a responsibility laid upon us—them to study, them to copy, them to meet.

J. VAUGHAN, *Sermons*, 1865.

REFERENCES: vi. 12.—R. Tuck, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 312; G. Calthrop, *Ibid.*, vol. xxix., p. 361. vi. 15-20.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iii., p. 367. vi. 17, 18.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xv., No. 893. vi. 18.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxiii., No. 1352; R. S. Candlish, *Sermons*, p. 170; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 27. vi. 18-20.—*Ibid.*, vol. iii., p. 93.

Chap. vi., ver. 19.—"Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil."

THE Anchor of the Soul.

Note a series of practical lessons.

I. The ship that is kept by an anchor, although safe, is not at ease. It does not, on the one hand, dread destruction; but neither, on the other hand, does it enjoy rest. "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you." Those who have entered the harbour do not need an anchor; and those who are drifting with the stream do not cast one out. The hope which holds is neither for the world without, nor the glorified within, but for Christ's people as they pass through life—rejoicing with trembling, faint yet pursuing. "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

II. But further: the ship that is held by an anchor is not only tossed in the tempest like other ships, it is tossed more than other ships. The ship that rides at anchor experiences rackings and heavings that ships which drift with the tide do not know. So souls who have no hold of Christ seem to lie softer on the surface of a heaving world than souls that are anchored in His power and love. The drifting ship, before she strikes, is more smooth and more comfortable than the anchored one; but when she strikes the smoothness is all over. The pleasures of sin are sweet to those who taste them; but the sweetness is only for a season.

III. When the anchor has been cast into a good ground, the heavier the strain that comes on it, the deeper and firmer grows its hold. As winds and currents increase in volume, the anchor bites more deeply into the soil, and so increases its preserving power. It is thus with a trusting soul; temptations, instead of driving him away from his Saviour, only fix his affections firmer on the Rock of Ages.

IV. The ship that is anchored is sensitive to every change of wind or tide, and ever turns sharply round to meet and resist the stream, from what direction soever it may flow. A ship is safest with her head to the sea and the tempest. In great storms the safety of all often depends on the skill with which the sailors can keep her head to the rolling breakers.

V. When the ship is anchored, and the sea is running high, there is great commotion at her bows. The waves in rapid succession come on and strike. Cast in the anchor when the sea is calm; you will need it to lean on when the last strain comes on.

W. ARNOT, *The Anchor of the Soul*, p. 9.

REFERENCES: vi. 19.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 129; J. Thain Davidson, *The City Youth*, p. 281. vi. 19-20.—J. Burton, *Christian Life and Truth*, p. 249; A. G. Brown, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxix., p. 349; C. Stanford, *Central Truths*, p. 102.

Chap. vi., ver. 20.—"Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."

THE lessons of comfort and instruction which we are to derive from the appearance of Melchisedec to Abraham are as clear as they are important.

I. The word "Melchisedec" leads our thoughts at once to that remarkable passage in Jeremiah xxiii., where it is declared of Christ that this is His name whereby He shall be called, "Jehovah Tsidkenu," the Lord our Righteousness. For Zedek and Tsidkenu being the same in their root, the only difference between the passages is that in the prophet; He is the Lord of Righteousness, while here He is its King. Whether we look, therefore, into the pictures of Genesis, or the shadows of prophecy, or the originals of the Gospel, righteousness and royalty meet together to make the Lord Jesus Christ.

II. Let us endeavour to catch the meaning of the word "righteousness." Before God it means justification. Take this in one of its comfortable applications. St. James says: "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." But you are afraid to take it. You say, "But I am not righteous." Read "justified," for that is what it means. "The effectual fervent prayer of a justified man availeth much."

III. But don't for a moment suppose a justified man can live unrighteously. A man who has had his sins pardoned through Christ has been too conversant with the strictest and

highest principles of equity, as carried out in the great scheme of his redemption, ever to be able to take afterwards a low standard of moral duties, or to think lightly of any of his obligations. The motive of his whole life lies in that righteousness of Christ in which he stands; and it is a rule of our being that the conduct always grows up to the motive. Therefore, that man cannot be justified who is not endeavouring to live justly.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 1.

I. THE whole history of Israel is a golden history; if we may so say, a Holy Ghost history. It differs from every other history. This nation God formed for Himself; and in the events, institutions, and great men of this people God, in a special manner, revealed Himself and the truths of His kingdom. And this because the eternal Word, the Saviour of sinners, the King of the Jews, the Head of the Church, the Heir of all things, who is the upholder and end of all ages, Jesus Himself, is organically and inseparably connected with the chosen nation. He is of the seed of David, of the seed of Abraham. Hence the names of persons and places, the omissions of circumstances, the use of the singular or the plural number, the application of a title—all things are under the control of the all-wise and gracious Spirit of God.

II. While we stand in awe, beholding the grandeur and infinite depth of the Scripture as one organic Spirit-built temple, and the beauty, perfection, and exquisite skill which characterise the most minute portion of this structure, we feel at home, and as in a peaceful and fragrant garden. For our admonition was the Scripture written—for us upon whom the ends of the world are come. I possess the whole in every little fragment; though weak, ignorant, and limited, I have perfect peace in the light of life, and often I find the truth of that saying of Luther, "In Scripture every little daisy is a meadow." Everywhere in Scripture we behold Jesus, the Lord, our great High Priest, enthroned in heaven; King of righteousness and Prince of Peace, who brings unto us the blessing of God, who sustains our inner life, and who gladdens and strengthens our hearts by giving us continually bread to eat and wine to drink.

A. SAPHIR, *Lectures on Hebrews*, vol. i., p. 338.

REFERENCE: vi. 20.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxix., p. 210.

Chap. vii., vers. 1-17.

MELCHISEDEC a Type.

I. What is meant by King? what by Priest? what is the idea of Kingship and of Priesthood? (1) The idea of Kingship was to some extent announced in the creation of Adam. A King is a man in the image of God, who represents upon earth God Himself, and unto whom, direct from God, without the intervention of any other, there is given power and dominion, that he may will according to the mind, according to the goodness and wisdom of God. (2) By priesthood is meant communion with God—that which brings unto man the love of God—that which brings unto God the worship and service of man. It need scarcely be added that Kingship and Priesthood cannot exist without Prophetship; for how can there be rule in the name of God, or how can there be a mediation of the love of God to man, and of our worship and obedience to God, unless there be in the first place a manifestation of God Himself, a revelation of His character? Christ is Prophet, Priest, and King.

II. Melchisedec, greater than Abraham, is also greater than the Levitical priesthood, and is thus a type of Christ, who is above Aaron, and whose priesthood is perfect.

III. Melchisedec appears in the inspired history as a priest solely by Divine appointment and right. His priestly dignity is personal; his position is directly God-given; his priesthood is inherent. Look now at the fulfilment. Jesus is the everlasting Father. The very Scriptures which describe Him as a Child born, as a Son given, which dwell on His humanity, declare to us His eternal divinity. He has no beginning of days, no end of life. His is now a continuous, not a successional priesthood; not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an eternal, an indissoluble life.

A. SAPHIR, *Lectures on Hebrews*, vol. i., p. 363.

REFERENCES: vii. 1-19.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 356. vii. 1 28.—R. W. Dale, *The Jewish Temple and the Christian Church*, p. 136.

Chap. vii., ver. 2.—"**First being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace.**"

THE King of Peace.

I. All words are relative, and there is sometimes a deep and solemn lesson in their relativeness. The very naming the name of peace presupposes that there has been war, and what a tremendous fact lies in that simple inference! Man is at war with his Creator. It is over all this widespread field of war that

the King of Salem has in His infinite grace stretched His sceptre, making the very ground of the battle the base and throne of the empire of His peace. The position of contending parties required an arbiter. He added the human nature to the Divine, that in His twofold being, laying his hand upon both, He might act the Day's-man's part, and unite man to God.

II. But His work ceased not here. He rose from His cross to the heavens, and as the sunken sun by the heat which it leaves covers the earth with dews, so did the Saviour, hidden from us for a little while, shed and distil on our world, from within the veil, the gentle influences of His peace-giving spirit. The secret warfare goes on indeed in the heart of every Christian, but then here is his comfort—the issue is secure. It is not as with the earthly warrior. There are no uncertainties here: his crest may stoop, but it cannot be conquered; the battle may often flag during the day, but he must win in the evening. There are many things which the world can give you: it can give you amusement; it can give you excitement; it can give you pleasure; but it can never give you peace of mind—no, not for an hour. Peace—all Salem is Christ's exclusively; by legacy from His cross, by deed of gift from His throne, He has made it over to us—"Peace I *leave* with you"; the more peace you take the better subject you are of that kingdom which is called Salem. Every fear is rebellion against its King. Nothing honours Christ like the peace of His people—peace is Salem's loyalty.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 15.

RIGHTEOUSNESS first, then Peace.

I. First, we find in this order a hieroglyphic of Christ's reconciling work.

II. I see in this order a summary of Christ's operations with the individual soul. There is no inward harmony, no peace of heart and quietness of nature, except on condition of being good and righteous men.

III. I see in this order the programme of Christ's operations in the world.

IV. I see in this order the prophecy of the end. The true Salem, the city of peace, is not here. For us and for the world the assurance stands firm—the King who Himself is righteousness is the King whose city is peace.

A. MACLAREN, *The Unchanging Christ*, p. 214.

REFERENCES: vii. 2.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxx., No. 1768; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 283. vii. 4.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*,

vol. xxxi., No. 1835; *Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. i., p. 80; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxvii., p. 232.

Chap. vii., vers. 15, 16.—"There ariseth another priest, who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life."

THE Power of an Endless Life.

The idea of a priesthood appears to have entered largely, if not universally, into the economy of the human race at all times. Before Christ came, men were under the priesthood of the law; since His advent, He Himself has become their priest. There is, of course, a wide and characteristic difference between these priesthoods; a difference as wide as that between the finite and the infinite: the mortal and the immortal: the temporal and the eternal. About the first there is the inexorable hardness of the cold, dead statue; in the second there are warmth, heart, life, and freedom. This difference is in exact accordance, not merely with the nature of the two priesthoods, but with their purposes. The one, being natural, took cognisance only of the outward, and adapted itself accordingly, so that it became "the law of a carnal commandment." The other repudiates this law, and takes cognisance of the inner life, and touching the motive-spring of spiritual aspirations, adapts itself to immortal requirements, and so becomes made "the power," or force, or impulse "of an endless life." The one supervises the carnal, the other the spiritual. The one guides the body, the other presides over the soul.

I. The emphatic word of the text is not "endless," but "power"—"the *power* of an endless life." The human soul does not float about in a serene equipoise of eternal mediocrity, but it grows and gathers strength with the ages. This growth must not be overlooked because it is latent and unseen. The soul is a nucleus or germ or kernel of an illimitable possibility.

But the implication of the text would seem to point to some monstrous perversion of the power of the endless life, to some mad, insensate, infatuated, wasting away of its power. Yes, it does take cognisance of some such fact, for it was the existence of this wreck which made a need-be for the intervention of the Great High Priest to whom the text refers. One of the most emphatic lessons which the Redeemer ever taught when on earth was propounded categorically, was put in the form of a question, and the question was this: "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" The very fact of

Christ putting such a question implies a recognition on His part of the tendency in man to underrate his soul, and to make mistakes in his computation of his value. And the selfsame cause which leads us to underrate our soul leads us to set aside redemption as a scheme or as a theory too prodigious for belief. We think these little souls are not worth so much, and we will not believe the scheme of salvation, because we will not rightly value the immortality to be saved. We must never look upon heaven as a condition of stationary mediocrity, and we must think ourselves into the conception of an eternal growth, a perpetual expansion: not merely everlasting existence, but everlasting enlargement. And having mastered this colossal idea, we must gauge our need by our capacity, and we must gauge Christ's work by both; not by our present capacity, but by our capacity after the lapse of ages, when they shall be grown with the eternity.

A. MURSELL, *Penny Pulpit*, New Series, No. 150.

Chap. vii., vers. 15-28.

I. THE Apostle announces a great principle in the words, "The law made nothing perfect." There was not a single point in which the law reached the end, for the end of the law is Christ. The imperfection of the law appears in these three points especially—(1) The forgiveness of sin; (2) Access unto God was not perfected under the old dispensation; (3) They had not received the Holy Ghost as an indwelling spirit. The law made nothing perfect. For perfection is true, substantial, and eternal communion with God through a perfect mediation, and this perfect mediation we have obtained in the Lord Jesus Christ.

II. Look at the contrast between the priests of the Levitical dispensation and this priest according to the order of Melchisedek. They were many: He is only one. Their priesthood was successional—the son followed the father: Christ has a priesthood which cannot be transferred, seeing that His life is indissoluble. They were sinful, but He is holy, pure, and spotless. They offered sacrifices in the earthly tabernacle: He presents Himself with His blood in the true sanctuary, which is high above all heavens, which is eternal. Christ, in virtue of His priesthood, can save completely (in a perfect, exhaustive, all-comprehensive manner) all who through Him come to God, because He ever liveth to intercede for them.

III. This peace or communion with God must combine three

things: (1) The mediation must go low enough. A ladder is of no use unless it comes down exactly to the point where I am. (2) It must go high enough: it must bring me into the presence of God. (3) It must go deep into our very hearts. As we are brought unto God, so must God be brought unto us, for the Christ that lives *for* us must also live *in* us.

A. SAPHIR, *Lectures on Hebrews*, vol. i., p. 397.

Chap. vii., ver. 16.—"Another priest, who is made . . . after the power of an endless life."

THE Power of Christ's endless life.

I. The first thought is the power which this endless life has of communicating itself. The very idea of such a life brings with it an inspiration and hope. Even if it were said that the idea is only the offspring of the soul of man, is it not a ground of hope that his soul has the power of forming such ideas? To conceive of eternity is so far to be partakers of eternity. We share what we see. But the power of Christ's endless life does more than communicate the hope of it to others, it gives the possession. When the original well of life was tainted and poisoned by sin, He came to open up a new and pure fountain. He secures for us a pardon consistent with righteousness, without which it could have brought no real life. He begins a new life in the soul, which has hard and manifold struggles with the fierce reluctances of the old nature. He encourages, strengthens, renews it, and at last makes it victorious.

II. Think (1) of the power Christ has in His endless life of conveying knowledge and experience. Death is the one great barrier between man and growth. (2) Note the sense of unity in Christ's plan, which we may derive from the power of His endless life. God has been pleased that the greatest enterprise the world contains should not be passed from hand to hand; it is not to flicker to and fro amid the gusts of grave-vaults, but to be in the power of an endless life. There are two things secured for the unity of Christians by Christ's unending life. The first is a oneness of heart and sympathy. The other unity is that of action. (3) Think how the power of Christ's endless life may fill us with the spirit of patience. (4) The power of Christ's endless life opens the prospect of abiding joy. The power of His endless life is still engaged in works like those which occupied Him on earth, but in grander measure and in wider fields; and what He offers to all who will accept it is a joy, not like His, but a joy the very same. It is the joy of knowledge,

of purity, of holy, happy service in doing God's will, in self-sacrifice, itself continued in self-forgetfulness, for without this the joy of heaven would be less than the joy of earth.

J. KER, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 34.

Chap. vii., ver. 16.—"The power of an endless life."

I. THAT Christ's life was and is "an endless life" needs no demonstration. He died—but death is no cessation of life. At the very moment He was dying—in the article of death—His own mind was willing it, His own act was doing it, His own priesthood was presenting it; and the very moment He was dead He had converse with one who died with Him; and He went at once and "preached to the spirits in prison"; and it was His own hand and His own power that raised Himself out of His grave after three days. And we know how careful God has been to identify that one risen, crucified life on through the forty days,—ascending before the same eyes that had been familiar with Him all along,—seen by at least three, the very same Son of Man in His glory, and then distinctly heard saying in heaven, "I am He that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore. Amen." So true is the prophecy, "Of the increase of His government and priesthood there shall be no end."

II. Now all the while that Christ was upon the earth He must have carried with Him the consciousness that everything He said and did was the beginning of its own eternity. Each thing had in it the germ of its own immortality. It was to go on and expand for ever and for ever. There is a deep, mystic sense in which the life that Christ lived in this world—its birth, its infancy, its development, its temptations, its solitude, its conflicts, its sufferings, its miracles, its joys, its holiness, its love, its dying, its rising, its soaring: all is enacted over and over again in the soul and in the experience of every individual that lives in time, nay, beyond time into eternity.

III. But the efficacy of the power of Christ's endless life does not stop here. It is the marvel of His grace that whatever is united to Christ, by that union shares His power; and hence, it is not only His prerogative—it is yours and mine—"the power of an endless life." We are all learning a little of Divine truth. It is but the simplest elements we know; and we know them very poorly. But what we know is the beginning of knowledge. I shall hold it, I shall build upon it in another state; and every new lesson I get is another step of the ladder

by which I go ascending in knowledge for ever and ever. We try, in our little way, to do something for God. What is it? Of itself nothing. But it is the actual commencement of those very exercises in the service of God which will occupy and fill our perfected condition for ever.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 4th series, p. 205.

REFERENCES: vii. 16.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. ii., p. 199; S. A. Tipple, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxv., p. 382. vii. 17.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xii., p. 11; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. vi., p. 333. vii. 19.—E. White, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xx., p. 312. vii. 20-22.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxvii., No. 1597. vii. 23-25.—*Ibid.*, vol. xxxii., No. 1915; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 357. vii. 23-28.—*Ibid.*, p. 358.

Chap. vii., vers. 24, 25.—"**This man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.**"

THE intercession of Christ the strength of our prayers.

Christ intercedes for us chiefly in two ways.

I. First, by the exhibition of Himself in His Divine manhood, pierced for us, raised, and glorified. His five blessed and holy wounds are each one a mighty intercession on our behalf. The glorious tokens of His cross and passion, exhibited before the throne of God, plead for us perpetually. His very presence in heaven is in itself an intercession for us. His sacrifice on the cross, though perfected by suffering of death only once in time, is in its power eternal. Therefore it stands a Divine fact, ever present and prevailing, the foundation and life of the redeemed world, before the throne of God.

II. But, further, we are told in Holy Scripture that He intercedes, that is, that He prays for us. This is a vast mystery of inscrutable depth. As God, He hears our prayers; as our Intercessor, He prays in our behalf. While He humbled Himself "in the days of His flesh," He prayed as a part of the work He had to do; it was for the accomplishing of the redemption of the world; for the blotting out of the sin of mankind. This prayer of humiliation passsd away with the sharpness of the cross, to which it was related, of which it was the shadow. The prayers which He offered, being yet on earth, were a part of His obedience and suffering to take away the sin of the world. All this, therefore, is excluded from His intercession now in heaven. When He entered into the holy place He left all these tokens of infirmity outside the veil. What then remains? There remains yet both His intercession as the High Priest,

and as Head of the Church, for the body still on earth. And in this there is nothing of humiliation, but all is honour and power; it does not cast a shade upon the glory of His Godhead, unless it be humiliation for the Word to be incarnate at the right hand of God. There is here (1) a great warning for the sinful. Christ's intercession is day and night prevailing over the kingdom of the wicked one. (2) Great comfort to all faithful Christians. We should (*a*) make the intercession of our Lord the measure of our prayers. (*b*) Make His intercession the law of our life. We ought to be what He prays we may become.

H. E. MANNING, *Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 255.

REFERENCES: vii. 24, 25.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 269. vii. 24-28.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 372.

Chap. vii., ver. 25.—"Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them."

SALVATION to the uttermost.

I. Christ Jesus is able to save to the uttermost: for there is no degree of guilt from which He cannot save. It would be a hard question to decide which is the worst form of human guilt. But we owe it to the power and grace of Immanuel to repeat that broader than human transgression is the Divine atonement.

II. But not only can Jesus save to the uttermost extent of depravity,—He can save to the uttermost hour of existence. Both truths may be abused, and both will be abused, by the children of wrath, by those who because of abounding grace continue in sin. But still we must state them, and up to the last moment of life Jesus is able to save.

III. Jesus saves to the uttermost, because He saves down to the lowest limits of intelligence.

IV. Jesus can save in the utmost pressure of temptation. He saves to the uttermost, for He ever intercedes; and but for the intercession faith would often fail. No sheep can be snatched from the bishop of souls; and interceding for the poor panic-stricken one who has ceased to pray for himself, the Saviour brings him back rejoicing—saved to the uttermost.

V. And Jesus saves to the uttermost because, when human power can proceed no further, He completes the salvation. "Lord Jesus, into Thy hands I commend my spirit," has been the oft-repeated prayer of the dying Christian in clearer and more conscious hours. And "Father, I will that this one

whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am" had been the Mediator's prayer for him not only before he came to die, but before he was born. Is not this the Saviour whom we need? the mighty Advocate of whom alone it is said, "Him the Father heareth always," whose intercession has all the force of a fiat, and whose treasury contains all the fulness of God.

J. HAMILTON, *Works*, vol. vi., p. 242.

CHRIST our only Priest.

I. Gross profanement and abandonment of our Christian privileges and duties has flowed directly from the superstitious error of making a broad and perpetual distinction between one part of Christ's Church and another; of making Christian ministers priests, and putting them between God and the people, as if they were to be in some sort mediators between God and their brethren, so that He could not be approached but through their ministry. The profaneness has followed from the superstition according to a well-known fact in our moral nature, that if the notion be spread, that out of a given number of men some are required to be holier than the rest, you do not, by so doing, raise the standard of holiness for the few, but you lower it for the many.

II. And, therefore, there is no truth more important, and more deeply practical, than that of Christ being our only Priest; that without any other mediator or intercessor or interpreter of God's will, or dispenser of the seals of His love to us, we each of us, of whatever age, sex, or condition, are brought directly into the presence of God through the eternal priesthood of His Son Jesus: that God has no commands for any of His servants which are not addressed to us also; has no revelation of His will, no promise of blessings, in which every one of Christ's redeemed has not an equal share. We all, being many, are one body, and Christ is our Head; we all, through no aid of any one particular person of our body, draw near through the blood of Christ to God. Where two or three are gathered together in Christ's name there is all the fulness of a Christian church, for there, by His own promise, is Christ Himself in the midst of them.

T. ARNOLD, *Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 86.

REFERENCES: vii. 25.—H. J. Wilmot Buxton, *The Children's Bread*, p. 79; Todd, *Lectures to Children*, p. 54; J. Sherman, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 70; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. ii., No. 84; W. Cunningham, *Sermons*, p. 224; J. Aldis, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxiv., p. 161; H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, vol. xxix., p. 210; *Homiletic*

Magazine, vol. vii., p. 23; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 9; *Ibid.*, vol. x., p. 78. vii. 26.—*Ibid.*, p. 147; W. Pulsford, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xix., p. 329.

Chap. viii., ver. 1.—"Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens."

The Great Possession.

I. Let us look at the reality of the fact. We *have* such an High Priest. It is not a matter of useless desire or of future hope, but of present accomplished possession.

II. The words affirm the singleness of the Person, and of the office He fulfils. "We have such an High Priest"—not many, but one, one and only one; so absolutely alone that it is blasphemy to arrogate any part of His work. Who shall dare to do what Christ is doing, and what room is there for human priests, when the Divine Priest ever liveth? It is as if a man bought a wretched taper to help the light of the noonday sun.

III. The words call attention strongly to the perfection of the high priesthood of Christ, the perfection of Him who fulfils it. "We have such an High Priest." Turn back to the preceding chapter, and you will find that the Apostle enumerates beauty after beauty in Christ, as if he were gathering together a cluster of jewels to deck His crown of glory. It is singular, when we read the passage carefully, how we find it crowded with insignia of honour. In human priests, if the most extravagant claims were admitted, it would yet be true that the dignity is only in the office, and not in the men. But when we turn to the true High Priest, how different it is. Here is not only the glory of the office, but the glory of the Person, infinitely qualified in His Deity to stand between the justice of God and the whole human race. He is no mere dying man like an earthly priest, but clothed with the power of an endless life. He does not fill a delegated office, like earthly priests, but fulfils His own office, and that so perfectly that He is able to save to the uttermost those that come unto God by Him. Let us, therefore, come boldly to the throne—come for pardon, come for peace, come for protection, come for sympathy, come for help here and glory hereafter, since we have such an High Priest.

E. Garbett, *Experiences of the Inner Life*, p. 40.

The Crowning Point—Christ the High Priest in heaven.

I. Christ in heaven. This sums up all our faith. Here is

our righteousness and our standing before God; here our storehouse of inexhaustible blessings, and of unsearchable riches; here our armoury, whence we obtain the weapons of our warfare; here is our citizenship and the hope of our glory. The right hand is the place of affection, as well as of honour and dignity. Christ is on the right hand of the Father, being His beloved Son, in whom He manifests His glory. The right hand is also the symbol of sovereign power and rule. Christ is Lord over all. Heaven being the locality of Christ's priesthood, it must needs be perfect, eternal, spiritual, and substantial. What are the things with which Christ is now occupied as a priest? In one respect He rests, because He finished His work upon the earth, and, therefore, He is described as sitting down on His Father's throne; His is now the perfect and peaceful rest of victory, for He has overcome. But, on the other hand, His is now a constant priestly activity.

II. If Christ is in heaven, we must lift up our eyes and hearts to heaven. There *are* things above. The things above are the spiritual blessings in heavenly places. The things above are also the future things for which we wait, seeing that our inheritance is not here upon earth. If our life is now hid with Christ in God, then, when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we also shall appear with Him in glory. Our citizenship is in heaven, and Jesus, whom we now love and serve, will come to receive us unto Himself.

A. SAPHIR, *Lectures on Hebrews*, vol. ii., p. 1.

Chap. viii., vers. 1, 2.

THE True Tabernacle.

I. The tabernacle has no fewer than three meanings: (1) In the first place, the tabernacle is a type, a visible illustration, of the heavenly place in which God has His dwelling. (2) The tabernacle is a type of Jesus Christ, who is the meeting-place between God and man. (3) The tabernacle is a type of Christ in the Church, of the communion of Jesus with all believers.

II. Our High Priest, by virtue of the one sacrifice, is in heaven. There can be only one temple. There was only one ark in the days of Noah, one tabernacle in the wilderness, one temple in Jerusalem. The forgiving, merciful, and glorious presence of Jehovah is manifested now in the throne on which Jesus is seated. Before the coming of Jesus, the shadow symbolised truth to believing worshippers. After the coming of Jesus, it must fade and vanish before the substance. If this is

true of the Levitical priesthood, which was of Divine appointment, how much more fearful is the assumption of any priestly title, position, or function, during the new dispensation. All Christians are priests. To imitate a revival of that which God has Himself set aside by a fulfilment, perfect and glorious, is audacious, and full of peril to the souls of men. It is not even the shadow of a substance, but the unauthorised shadow of a departed shade.

III. We learn here of the wonderful grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the minister of the sanctuary; He is still going on with His service. He has ascended into the holiest, into the region of perfection and glory; but not to forget us who are still in the wilderness. As he loved His own, even to the end, He loves them now, and throughout all the ages; and He will come again to receive us unto Himself.

A. SAPHIR, *Lectures on Hebrews*, vol. ii., p. 31.

REFERENCES: viii. 1-3.—G. Huntingdon, *Sermons for Holy Seasons*, p. 223. viii. 1-5.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 358; R. W. Dale, *The Jewish Temple and the Christian Church*, p. 153.

Chap. viii., vers. 1, 2, 6, 10-12.

THE New Covenant—Its Promises.

I. Pardon is the last named of the promises, but it is the first bestowed. The terms of the promise indicate two things respecting the blessing it holds forth, namely, its source and its fulness. (1) Its source—"I will be merciful to their unrighteousness." The source, then, of the promised pardon is the mercifulness of God. We mean, of course, its moral source, for its legal source is the atonement of Jesus Christ. (2) The fulness of mercy—"Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." This oblivion of transgression is a feature of the Divine pardon, much emphasized in Scripture, with a view no doubt of duly impressing men with the fact of its absolute entirety.

II. The intuitional knowledge of God assured by the better Covenant. The knowledge of God obtained through experience of His pardon is the grandest of all knowledge of Him. This is a knowledge of God that makes Him the predominant idea of the man's whole life, the supreme fact of his life, whether as regards its activities or its happiness.

III. The Divine kinship assured by the New Covenant. "God is not ashamed to be their God." He permits His people the utmost freedom in their assertion of the relationship. He holds it not in any way derogatory to His Divine dignity to

be recognised as their Father. This relationship is in itself a guarantee of the fullest and most devoted service on their behalf.

IV. Observe the assurance which the better Covenant gives of a loving, childlike subjection to the Divine will. "I will put My laws in their minds, and will write them in their hearts." We see from this how completely the law of God, or the Divine will, becomes the motive power in the life of the divinely pardoned man, how wholly it assimilates his entire being, bringing it into beautiful harmony with the mind of God.

A. J. PARRY, *Phases of Christian Truth*, p. 170.

REFERENCES: viii. 2.—W. M. Statham, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xii., p. 1. viii. 5.—P. Brooks, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxiii., p. 344; *Ibid.*, vol. xxxiv., p. 150; A. Johnson, *Ibid.*, vol. xxxv., p. 356; S. Macnaughton, *Real Religion and Real Life*, p. 184.

Chap. viii., ver. 6.—**"But now hath He obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also He is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises."**

THE New Covenant—The Superiority of Its Promises.

This superiority relates to two things—the quality of the promises and their certainty.

I. The Quality of the Blessings. (1) Note the greater excellence of the Christian blessings. The Jewish religion had its pardon, or something that passed for pardon; the superiority, however, of the pardon held forth by the gospel is indicated by the expression, "And their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." Contrast this statement with what is said respecting the method of dealing with sins under the Old Covenant: "But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance of sins every year." In the one case we have the forgetting of sins, in the other the remembrance of them. The ancient pardon, then, was not really such, but only a kind of reprieve annually renewed, a kind of suspension of the sentence, not the removal or abrogation of it. It was in the nature of a ticket-of-leave transaction. A convict, through good behaviour, obtains a suspension of his punishment, but he is not pardoned; for one of the conditions of his liberty is that he report himself regularly at stated times to the authorities. There was only sufficient efficacy in the Jewish sacrifices to revive the memory of sin; but the infinite sacrifice of Christ, on the contrary, is of sufficient efficacy, not only to abolish the penalty of sin, but also to obliterate the very memory of it, in the sense we have

explained, from the mind of God. (2) The greater excellence of the knowledge of God, assured by the New Covenant. (3) The greater excellence of the relationship between God and His people. (4) The greater excellence of the formative principle of the New Covenant.

II. The superior certainty of the promise of the New Covenant. The utmost assurance that these promises will be fully realised in the experience of every one who accepts Christ's salvation is given us in the fact that they are called by the term covenant. The term "promise" is merged in the term "covenant." This substitution of covenant for promise indicates the element of certainty belonging to the latter. To appreciate properly the nice use of terms by our author, we must bear in mind the difference between a promise and a covenant. A promise is the bare word; a covenant is the act which ratifies that word and guarantees its due performance. It is implied, then, by this designation "covenant," applied to the promises, that they are accompanied by guarantees for their due fulfilment. The promises of the gospel rest upon the atonement of Christ. The grand and mighty act of sacrifice is the sure foundation whereon rest the Divine promises enumerated in the text.

A. J. PARRY, *Phases of Christian Truth*, p. 184.

Chap. viii., vers. 6-13.

THE Blessings of the New Covenant.

I. The blessings of the New Covenant are all based upon the forgiveness of sin. God promises to put His laws into our minds, and write them upon our hearts, and to be to us a God, *because* He is merciful to our unrighteousness, and will remember our sins and iniquities no more. All our progress in the Divine life, and all the consolations of the Christian pilgrim, are rooted in this primary doctrine of forgiveness through faith in Jesus.

II. From Jesus, the Anointed, all Christians receive the Holy Ghost. They have, according to their name, the unction from above. Hence they possess the Teacher who guides unto all truth. Knowledge is within them. There is within them a well of living water. Every Christian knows himself individually, and that because he is taught of God; he relies not on the testimony of man; his faith stands in the power of God.

III. The personal knowledge of our God is the source of our spiritual life. It is our safeguard against error and against sin. It is the great and constant gift of God, the fruit of Christ's redemption. We now see and know God and His Son; we know

Jesus, because Jesus always knows His sheep, revealing Himself unto them, and giving them guidance and life. This knowledge is nothing less than walking with God, walking in the light, praying without ceasing. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him. In much darkness, amid many difficulties, and in constant warfare, we yet walk in the light of His countenance, until at last we shall see Him as He is, and know even as we are known.

A. SAPHIR, *Lectures on Hebrews*, vol. ii., p. 55.

REFERENCES: viii. 6-13.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 359; R. W. Dale, *The Jewish Temple and the Christian Church*, p. 163. viii. 9-11.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 83. viii. 10.—*Good Words*, vol. iii., p. 571; *Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. ix., p. 231; *Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. iii., p. 52. viii. 12.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxviii., No. 1685. viii. 13.—G. Dawson, *Sermons on Disputed Points*, p. 73.

Chap. ix., ver. 1.—"Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service."

THE Simplicity of Christian Ritual.

The simplicity of worship in the Christian Church is a sign of spiritual advancement—

I. Inasmuch as it arises, in some measure, from the fact that the Gospel rites are commemorative, whilst those of the former dispensation were anticipative.

II. Inasmuch as it arises from the fact that, whilst the rites of Judaism were mainly disciplinary, those of Christianity are spontaneous and expressive.

III. The simplicity of the Christian rites affords a safeguard against those obvious dangers which are incident to all ritual worship. (1) The first of these is the tendency of the unspiritual mind to stop short at the symbol; (2) the next is the too common tendency to mistake æsthetic emotion for religious feeling.

J. CAIRD, *Sermons*, p. 272.

Chap. ix., vers. 1-5.

WORSHIP in Spirit and Truth.

I. Apart from revelation men have not the idea of God as Lord, Spirit, Father; and even after the light of Scripture has appeared, God is to many only an abstract word, by which they designate a complex of perfections rather than a real, living, loving, ever-present Lord, to whom we speak and of whom we ask the blessings that we need. Without revelation prayer is

regarded not so much as asking God in order to receive from Him, but as an exercise of mind which elevates, ennobles, and comforts. It is a monologue.

II. Unto the Gentiles God never gave an Aaronic priesthood, an earthly tabernacle, a symbolical service. From the very commencement He taught them, as Jesus taught the woman of Samaria, that now all places are alike sacred; that the element in which God is worshipped is spirit and truth; that believers are children who call God Father; that they are a royal priesthood who through Jesus are brought nigh unto God, who enter into the holy of holies which is above. How difficult it is to rise from the spirit of paganism to the clear and bright atmosphere of the gospel! Priesthood, vestments, consecrated buildings, symbols, and observances all place Christ at a great distance, and cover the true, sinful, and guilty state of the heart which has not been brought nigh by the blood of Christ. The sinner believes, and as a child he is brought by Jesus unto the Father. High above all space, high above all created heavens, before the very throne of God, is the sanctuary in which we worship. Jesus presents us to the Father. We are beloved children, clothed in white robes, the garments of salvation, and the robes of righteousness. We are priests unto God.

A. SAPHIR, *Lectures on Hebrews*, vol. ii., p. 76.

REFERENCE: ix. 1-12.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 469.

Chap. ix., ver. 4.—"Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant."

THE Holy Chest.

"Of which we cannot now speak particularly," said the author of the epistle. If he had gone into particulars further exposition would have been needless. What was the lesson taught by this wonderful article of tabernacle furniture? Are we not to look upon it as a picture of Christ?

I. Let us consider the outside. What do we see? A chest most likely about three feet long, by eighteen inches wide, and eighteen inches deep. It is a box made of common wood, but covered with fine gold. And is not our Jesus both human and Divine? Both are there, and you cannot separate them; just as the ark was not perfect, though the right shape and size, till it was covered with fine gold, so Christ could not be Jesus

without the gold of divinity. The Jews stumbled here; they were ready to receive a human Messiah, but they would not have anything to do with the Divine element. Still we do not overlook the wood, though it is covered with gold. It is sweet to know that Jesus shares our nature. He passed over the cedar of angelic life, and took the common shittim, the tree of the wilderness. (1) At each corner there is a ring of gold to receive the staves by which the Levites carried the ark on their shoulders. The people were safe if they went where the ark went. It would be a blessed thing if the Church of God would be persuaded to go where Christ would have gone. (2) At each end of the ark are the cherubim, the representatives of the angelic world. They gaze with interest upon the mercy-seat. Is it not Jesus who links heaven to earth? As the cherubim gazed on the blood on the mercy-seat, so in heaven the Saviour is the centre of attraction, "a Lamb as it had been slain."

II. We will now look inside the ark, and what do we see? (1) "The golden pot" filled with manna. Does not this teach that in Christ we have spiritual food? (2) The rod that budded convinced the people that Aaron was chosen priest. So Christ has the true, God-chosen, God-honoured, God-prevalent priesthood. (3) The tables of the covenant, the new, unbroken tables, remind us that in Christ we have a perfect law. He is our righteousness. (4) Wherever the ark went it meant destruction to the foes of the Almighty; so if Jesus be with us we shall win the day. And in the last struggle, when we cross the bridgeless river, we shall need Christ as the Israelites needed the ark when they crossed over Jordan.

T. CHAMPNESS, *New Coins from Old Gold*, p. 45.

REFERENCES: ix. 4.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. vi., p. 469. ix. 6-9.—R. W. Dale, *The Jewish Temple and the Christian Church*, p. 186.

Chap. ix., vers. 7-14.

CHRIST entered in by His own blood.

We who believe that Christ has entered by His own blood into the holy of holies have thereby received a fourfold assurance.

I. The redemption which Christ has obtained is eternal. Christ's precious blood can never lose its power till all the chosen saints of God are gathered into glory. It is a *real* redemption from the guilt and power of sin, from the curse of the law, from the wrath of God, from the bondage of Satan, and from the second death; an *eternal* redemption, because sin is

forgiven; Satan, death, and hell are vanquished; everlasting righteousness is brought in; we are saved for evermore.

II. We have now access to God; we are brought into the very presence of God; we enter into the Holy of Holies. The veil no longer conceals the counsel of God's wonderful love; sin in the flesh no longer separates us from the presence of the Most High. Very awful, and yet most blessed and sweet, is this assurance. God is very near to each one of us. Though we see Him not, yet is He nearer to us than the very air we breathe; for our very being, and living, and moving are in Him.

III. Our consciences are purged by the blood of Christ to serve the living God. To us has been given what the old covenant saints did not possess—*perfection*, the absolution and remission of sins.

IV. The things to come are secured to us by Him who is the heir, and in whom even now all spiritual blessings in heavenly places are ours.

A. SAPHIR, *Lectures on Hebrews*, vol. ii., p. 123.

Chap. ix., ver. 9.—"Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience."

LOVE in the Ordinance of Sacrifice.

I. In order to be acceptable to God, self-sacrifice must be unreserved and complete. It must be the perfect rendering up of the will to His will, of the being to His disposal, of the energies to His obedience. No reserve can be for an instant thought of. Accordingly, all that was dedicated to Him under the law was fully and unreservedly His; not to be recalled for ordinary cases, not to be divided from His service.

II. Now it must be obvious to us that such full and entire rendering up to God is impossible on the part of a man whose will is corrupted by sin. Every victim was to be without blemish. If each man would not for himself fulfil the spiritual meaning of the sacrifice, the sacrifice itself taught him something of a substitute for himself who in his stead might be offered to God. And the law working on this continually familiarised the people to the idea of one such substitute for all.

III. Again, in the substitution indicated by the sacrifice there must be represented a transference of guilt from the offerer to the substitute. For this the law also took special care (the scapegoat).

IV. The next point which we require is, that some method of communication of the virtue of the sacrifice and its acceptableness to the offerer must be indicated. The offerers *partook* of the sacrifice. The law was not only a negative preparation for Christ in pulling down the stronghold of human pride and bringing men in guilty before God, but it was a positive preparation for Him, in indicating, as it did, His complete atoning sacrifice, and in announcing Him by repeated prophetic intimations. They who as yet knew not Him could not then perceive the full significance of them; but we, looking back from the foot of the cross and the light of God's Spirit, can gather strong confirmation for our most holy faith from all this preparation and typical foreshadowing of Christ.

H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 115.

REFERENCES: ix. 10.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 421. ix. 11-12. —*Homilist*, vol. i., p. 184.

Chap. ix., vers. 13, 14.

SELF-OBLATION the true idea of Obedience.

I. St. Paul here tells us that Christ "offered up Himself," from which we may learn (1) that the act of offering was His own act, and (2) that the oblation was Himself. He was both Priest and Sacrifice; or, in a word, the atoning oblation was His perfect obedience, both in life and in death, to the will of His Father. His whole life was a part of the one sacrifice which, through the eternal Spirit, He offered to His Father; namely, the reasonable and spiritual sacrifice of a crucified will. We learn from this—(1) into what relation towards God the Church has been brought by the atonement of Christ. The whole mystical body is offered up to the Father as a kind of firstfruits of His creatures. The Church is gathered out of the world and offered up to God; it is made partaker of the atonement of Christ, of the self-oblation of the Word made flesh. (2) The nature of the sacraments. Under one aspect they are gifts of spiritual grace from God to us; under another they are acts of self-oblation on our part to God. He of His sovereign will bestows on us gifts which we, trusting in His promises, offer ourselves passively to receive.

II. We may learn from this view of the great act of atonement what is the nature of the faith by which we become partakers of it, or, in other words, by which we are justified. Plainly it is not a faith which indolently terminates in a belief that Christ died for us; or which intrusively assumes to itself the office of applying to its own needs the justifying grace of the atonement,

Justifying grace is the trust of a willing heart, offered up in obedience to God; it is His will working in us, knitting us to Himself. Our faith, if we would endure unto the end, must be stern, unyielding, and severe. It must bear the impress of His passion, and make us seek the signs of our justification in the sharper tokens of His cross.

III. We learn what is the true point of sight from which to look at all the trials of life. We are not our own, but His; all that we call ours is His; and when He takes it from us—first one loved treasure and then another, till He makes us poor and naked and solitary—let us not sorrow that we are stripped of all we love, but rather rejoice for that God accepts us; let us not think that we are left here, as it were, unseasonably alone; but remember that, by our bereavements, we are in part translated to the world unseen. He is calling us away and sending on our treasures. The great law of sacrifice is embracing us, and must have its perfect work. Like Him, we must be made, "perfect through suffering."

H. E. MANNING, *Sermons*, vol. i., p. 242.

REFERENCES: ix. 13, 14.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxv., No. 1481; vol. xxxi., No. 1846; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 469; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., pp. 88, 89, 224; vol. vi., pp. 147, 333.

Chap. ix., ver. 14.—"How much more shall the blood of Christ . . . purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God."

THESE words refer to, perhaps, the most remarkable of all the typical ordinances of the Old Testament. One of the chief defilements contracted under the law was that caused by contact with a dead body. So rigid was the law that the priests were forbidden to take part in funeral rites, except for the nearest relations, lest they should, by possible contact with the dead, be incapacitated for the ministerial office. It was a perpetual testimony to the truth that God made not death—that death is the strange thing superinduced by sin upon the rational creation. As Christ's one death cleanses all sin even to the end, so the ashes of a single heifer served to the purifying of many generations. Now to this remarkable ordinance St. Paul alludes: If the sprinkling of the water containing a portion of the ashes of this slaughtered bull avail to remove the ceremonial defilement of death, and that not for one but for many generations, how much more shall the blood of Christ, shed once for all, purge the innermost conscience!

I. What are the dead works which, like the touch of a corpse, pollute the conscience of man, and disqualify him from standing

up as a servant of the living God? They are twofold. First, you are to understand by the term all acts of false worship,—the homage paid by the heathen to their idols; secondly, all acts of low or unsound morality,—all acts are themselves vicious, or of semi-virtue. These are comprehended in the phrase "dead works." They are works having, you see, a semblance of life, just as the soulless flesh will preserve awhile the hues of health, misleading some even as to the fact of death, and being nevertheless to the more experienced eye wholly devoid of the breath of existence. The conscience of the old world before Christ was defiled and weakened. Wherever the Christian Church was implanted, and the name of Christ adored, the conscience was, as it were, awakened from the dead.

II. There are two or three short lessons which grow out of the subject. (1) The first concerns the true character of the work which the Church of Christ has to do in a nation. Now, there are two ways of dealing with men in spiritual things. The one is that of accustoming them to lean entirely upon others; the second is that of teaching them with God's help to walk by themselves. The surest sign of vigorous Church life is in the quickened and enlightened conscience of the people. (2) The whole argument brings out in undissoluble union the connection that exists between the doctrines of the gospel and the morality of the gospel. That which this modern world of ours wants is the public honesty, the domestic purity of Christian life, without mystery, and God manifest in the flesh. It may not be. The conscience of mankind has not been purged by a system of morals, but by the life and death of the incarnate God. (3) What a warning there is here against allowing ourselves in anything which has the least tendency to pollute the conscience.

J. R. WOODFORD, *Penny Pulpit*, new series, No. 496.

REFERENCES: ix. 15-22.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. vii., p. 73. ix. 15-23.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 470. ix. 16, 17.—*Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. i., p. 489. ix. 20.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxvi., No. 1567. ix. 22.—*Ibid.*, vol. iii., No. 118; *Ibid.*, *Morning by Morning*, p. 33; H. J. Wilmot Buxton, *Sunday Sermonettes for a Year*, p. 134; E. Cooper, *Practical Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 16; Bishop Crowther, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 385; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 527.

Chap. ix., ver. 24.—"Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us."

I. and II. THE sacrifice and intercession of Christ are, of course, distinct in idea; but, in fact, are so united that it is more con-

venient to consider them together. Sacrifice is intercession, not in word, but in act. It makes atonement for man with God, that is, sets God and man at one. It comes between: that is, in the literal sense of the word, intercedes, mediates between the two, reconciles them; all which terms apply with equal propriety to the one office as to the other, sacrifice and intercession. Every description of Christ's High Priesthood establishes the truth that it is exercised now continually in heaven. The effect which the continued intercession of Christ must exercise over our destiny cannot be measured by any estimate of ours. His prayers are uttered night and day, hour by hour, whether men pray or whether they sleep. And then think how great a motive it is for men to pray, that their prayers may vibrate along the chords of His. We may take our prayers and have them moulded after His, and stamped with His name, and authorised by His image and superscription, as men carry to the royal mint the ingots of gold which their hands have dug out of the earth, and have them coined into money that shall pass current in the land.

III. Consider what comfort exists in the possession of the sympathy of Christ, and in the knowledge that He exists in the body of man, alive to all the human wants and natural infirmities of the heart. In heaven is the presence of One who has raised our nature to Himself to glory. And so long as He retains that nature (which is for ever) we believe that "there is no other thing which He will not effect for us." For our souls He represents His all-sufficient sacrifice; our prayers He sustains by his intercession; our troubles He soothes by the comfort of His sympathy, and our whole body He will change that it may be like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself.

C. W. Furse, *Sermons at Richmond*, p. 63.

Presence of Christ Incarnate in Heaven.

I. Consider first the question of a body possibly existing in heaven. If Adam had kept His state of innocence, he would not have died, nor would he, we imagine, have continued for ever in Paradise, among the trees and the beasts of the earth. We believe that he would have been translated in his body, glorified, to heaven. Enoch was thus removed, and afterwards Elijah. Again, Moses, though his body had been hidden in the earth, appeared after a thousand years, above a hill of Paradise, and

was heard to talk. Whence did his body, and that of Elijah, come? None can say. It is enough for our purpose to admit that their presence at the Transfiguration is a proof that bodies can exist somewhere above the range of this lower earth.

II. "The Word was made flesh," the manhood of Christ was perfect. He took not on Him the form of angels, but the seed of Abraham. It is a characteristic of human nature, that once man is man for ever. If, then, Christ is a perfect man, He is man for ever. The eternal Son, marrying Himself to our nature, became with it our flesh. Therefore in heaven, far above Paradise, the world of spirits, the Head of our race already lives in the form and fashion of man.

III. Consider the influence which the presence of Christ incarnate in heaven has upon man below, and the practical difference which this doctrine causes in our estimate of His work for us. (1) According to this doctrine, it is nothing strange, disparaging to the love of God in Christ, if we find that a special promise of grace is pledged to particular modes of seeking Him. If Christ be not really and spiritually present in the ordinances which He has instituted, in a sense of more close and intimate communion than can be applied to the generally diffused mercy and power of God, then the idea of any church is a fiction. Our acts of worship are not fictions, our sacraments are not representations. There is an electric current ever circulating from Christ incarnate through the members of His body, which is the Church.

C. W. Furse, *Sermons at Richmond*, p. 51.

Ascension Day.

I. What ought to be our feelings who know that our Lord and God, who reigns in heaven, is man too,—that He is man now, and will be for ever in the fulness of glorified human nature. Different feelings possess us as we contemplate this glorified human nature in Christ, our judge or our intercessor. Our judge is one who appeared as man upon earth, and who is man now, "with all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature in heaven." He knew the secret motives upon which the Scribes and Pharisees acted, although these were covered by the most pious exterior. Their hidden thoughts were discovered to Him. Well, then, He who knew what was in man in the days of His flesh, He who judged man then, knows and weighs man now in heaven—even the Man Christ Jesus. He judges us now, though not openly; He looks into our hearts, He knows what is true and what is false there, what is

sound and what is corrupt. Our hearts are open to one who is man; we are searched and tested by His infallible insight. If we fear the face of mere man, shall we not dread the face of Him who is both God and Man?

II. We celebrate, then, this day the Ascension of our great Judge into heaven, where He sits upon His throne and has all the world before Him; every human soul, with its desires and aims, its thoughts, words, and works, whether they be good or bad. Every man who is running now his mortal race is from first to last before the eye of Him who as on this day ascended with His human nature into heaven. But we also celebrate the entrance of Christ into heaven to sit there in another character, viz., as our Mediator, Intercessor, and Advocate. He sits there as High Priest, to present to the Father His own atonement and sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It is our Lord's supreme place in the universe *now*, and His reign over all the worlds, visible and invisible, which we commemorate in His Ascension. We are especially told in Scripture never to think of our Lord as having gone away and left His Church; but always to think of Him as now reigning, now occupying His throne in heaven, and from thence ruling over all. He rules in His invisible dominions, among the spirits of just men made perfect; He rules in the Church here below, still in the flesh. There He receives a perfect obedience, here an imperfect one; but He still rules over all; and though we may, many of us, resist His will here, He overrules even that resistance to the good of the Church, and conducts all things and events by His spiritual providence to their great final issue. Let us worship our Lord Jesus Christ, then, both with fear and love; but also remembering that in those in whose heart He dwells, perfect love casteth out fear.

J. B. Mozley, *University Sermons*, p. 244.

References: ix. 24.—J. J. S. Perowne, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxi., p. 216; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 145; vol. iii., p. 44.

Chap. ix., vers. 24-28.

The Threefold Manifestation of the Redeemer.

I. The Redeemer's first appearance in the world was His Incarnation in the fulness of time as a member of the human race, to endure the death appointed to sinners, and to obtain for us eternal redemption.

II. The Ascension entrance into the presence of God was the glorious end and consummation of the Redeemer's atoning

appearance on earth. There is a certain change in the word now employed by the writer that suggests a boundless difference between the humbled and the exalted state of our Lord Himself. He appears boldly and gloriously before God. His manifestation in time was throughout marked, not only by self-abasement, but also by visitation from above. But now is Christ risen and ascended back to His Father's bosom. He has returned from the far country whither His love carried Him to seek and to find the lost. It was a prelude of this eternal complacency that glorified Him on the Mount of Transfiguration. But though He received honour and glory there, He saw in the distance that other mount, and descended again into the valley of humiliation to reach it. He goes up to be glorified eternally. He "appears in the presence of God to go out no more." The emphasis rests on the words "for us." Our Lord is in heaven the accepted propitiation for human sin. He pleads the virtue of His atonement, which is the virtue of His Divine-human self, as the glorious Anti-type of the typical High Priest entering the holiest on the day of atonement. For all who are His He receives the heavens. His presence there is the security that they shall be there also.

III. The Redeemer will appear a second time, without sin unto salvation. Here it must be remembered that a long chapter of the Church's expectation is omitted. The millennial history that precedes His advent, the glorious circumstances of His coming, and many and wonderful events that derive their glory from it, are all passed by. The atonement is consummated, and that is all; it ends, for He comes without the cross: it is perfected in the salvation of His saints. Our Lord will appear, to those who have no other desire in heaven or earth but Himself, not for judgment, but for salvation. They died with Him, and they shall live with Him; they suffered with Him, and they shall reign with Him. Here, we are saved by hope. In this life, salvation is of the spirit; and that salvation is perfect, save as the spirit is the soul, encompassed about by the infirmities of the bodily organ. Many penalties of sin remain untaken away while we live below. In Paradise these are gone, but there remains the widowhood of the disembodied spirit. Not that the salvation is incomplete, but it is perfect only in part. When we receive Jesus, and are made partakers of Him for ever, then will salvation be full, "complete in Him."

W. B. POPE, *Sermons and Charges*, p. 84.

REFERENCES: ix. 26.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xiii., No. 759;

vol. xvi., Nos. 911, 962; L. Mann, *Life Problems*, p. 55; *Homilist*, 4th series, vol. i., p. 39; R. Thomas, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xii., p. 330; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. x., p. 147.

Chap. ix., ver. 27.—"It is appointed unto man once to die but after this the judgment."

I. It is appointed unto man once to die, but after that they are still men. No affection, no principle of human nature, is lost. The form of man is not lost. Before death, men are covered with the opaque earth-form, and therefore they cannot be judged. Death removes the earthly mask, and then they can be truly judged.

II. These two appearances of man correspond with the two appearances of Christ, the representative Man of the race. As Christ inherits to eternity what He acquired in His earthly humanity, so shall we. Our brief planetary existence is quite long enough for the inner and essential man to take the stamp, spirit, and general character of His endless after life. The progressive law of our being requires the opening of the books. Our lives make a nature in us, and as is the nature made, such will be the sphere of our existence, and such our associates.

III. A man is under no absolute necessity of considering the bearings of his present life, on his future standing in the eternal world. If he prefer he can allow himself to be fully absorbed, by desiring and minding the things that pertain to his ephemeral flesh. And if he does he will simply find himself, after death, made and formed according to this world, and wholly unfitted for association with kingdom of heaven men. There is no fear of his being judged unjustly. He will appear what he is. The dominant affections that are in him will manifest themselves whether we are made out of heaven, for heaven; or made out of more dusky elements, for the dusky world and its dusky associates. We shall have to keep the appointment that is made for us. All the laws without us and all the laws within us will urge us on to our own place.

IV. It is every way wise and friendly that time should close with us and eternity open. Time is the reign of appearances, eternity is the reign of truth. Death opens a new door, and we pass from behind our curtains and disguises into the great sunlight. God is the eternal sunlight. God is truth. If, with the unveiled face of our heart, we form the habit of beholding His face in Jesus, the glory of His face will change us into

the same image, and our glorious Lord will be glorified in us.

J. PULSFORD, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xv., p. 401.

I. THERE is no undoing the past altogether. When the books are opened, we shall be judged out of the things which are written in the books, notwithstanding the book of life. The days of swine-keeping leave their mark. The woman of the city, to whom much was forgiven, loved much. But who that knows what repentance is can doubt that in the deepest depths of her love dwelt ever an earnest longing, which nothing in the present or the future could satisfy,—a longing for the innocence that had been lost, and for a memory unscathed by sin?

II. There has set in of late a strange foolhardiness, as if in the present age it were an agreed point among all people of discernment that judgment to come is an idle tale. Very seductive this must be to the young. Even if there be a judgment after death, death to them seems a long way off; and they have heard that divines themselves do not nowadays paint the judgment so terribly as they used to do. God is good. May they not leave Him to bring goodness out of all things in the end?

III. Our Judge is human, not a piece of mechanism. But His judgment is even more exquisitely true than that of man's most exquisite workmanship. Let us look to Him now, that we may fear Him then. Let us seek to be one with His righteousness now, that we may then be one with His sentence.

J. FOXLEY, *Oxford and Cambridge Pulpit*, Dec. 6th., 1883.

REFERENCES: ix. 27.—W. Pulsford, *Trinity Church Sermons*, p. 182; *Saturday Evening*, p. 276; W. R. Thomas, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxv., p. 37; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. x., p. 342. ix. 27, 28.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. viii., No. 430; H. P. Liddon, *Advent Sermons*, vol. i., p. 69; *Ibid.*, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 369; J. Pulsford, *Ibid.*, vol. xv., p. 401; *Ibid.*, vol. xxvii., p. 374; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. ix., p 44. ix. 28.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. x., p. 100; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ix., p. 278.

Chap. x., vers. 1-7.

Lo, I come.

I. None but the Son of God could offer unto the Father a sacrifice to please Him, and to reconcile us unto Him in a perfect manner. The burnt-offerings and sin-offerings were ordained merely as shadows and temporary types of that one offering, the self-devotedness of the Son of God to accomplish

all the will of God, the counsel of salvation. It is the Divine and eternal offering of Himself unto the Father in which the incarnation and death of the Lord Jesus are rooted ; it is the voluntary character of His advent and passion, and it is the Divine dignity of the Mediator, which render His work unique, to which nothing can be compared, and a repetition of which is impossible.

II. Rise from the river to its source, from the rays of light and love to the eternal origin and fount. See in the life, the obedience, the agony of Jesus, the expression of that free surrender of Himself, and espousal of our cause, which was accomplished in eternity, in His own all-glorious and perfect divinity. Beware lest you see in Him only the faith and obedience, the sufferings and death of the Son of Man ; see His eternal divinity shining through and sustaining all His humanity.

III. This truth is revealed to us, not merely to establish our hearts in peace, and to fill us with adoring gratitude and joy, but here, marvellous to say, is held out to us a *model* which we are to imitate, a principle of life which we are to adopt. So wondrously are high mysteries and deep doctrines intertwined with daily duties, and the transformation of our character, that the Apostle Paul, when exhorting the Philippians to avoid strife and vain-glory, and have brotherly love and helpfulness, ascends from our lowly earthly path into this highest region of the eternal covenant. As we owe all to Him, let us be not merely debtors, but followers of Him who came, not to do His own will, and to be ministered unto, who came to love and to serve, to give and to bless, to suffer and to die.

A. SAPHIR, *Lectures on Hebrews*, vol. ii., p. 167

REFERENCE : x. 1-14.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 46.

Chap. x., ver. 5.—"**Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared me.**"

THE Body of Christ.

The mystical body of Christ is the whole fellowship of all who are united to Him by the Spirit, whether they be at rest in the world unseen, or here in warfare still on earth, differing only in this, that all His members who have been gathered out of this world are secure for ever ; but in this world they who are still in trial may yet be taken away, and, as the fruitless and withered branch, cast forth for the burning. There

are three manners, three miracles of Divine omnipotence, by which Christ's one body has been, is, and present: the first, as mortal and natural; the second, supernatural, real, and substantial; the third, mystical, by our incorporation. Surely these great realities ought to teach us many high and practical truths.

I. As, for instance, with how much of loving reverence we ought to regard every baptised person. He is a member of Christ; what more can be spoken or conceived? He is united by the Spirit of Christ to the mystical body, of which the Lord made flesh is the supernatural Head. He has in Him a life and an element which is above this world; even "the powers of the world to come." We partake of Him—of His very flesh, of His mind, of His will, and of His Spirit.

II. This is the great reality which has restored to the world two great laws of love, the unity and the equality of man. All the members of Christ are one in Him, and equal, because He is in all. The highest and most endowed is but as the poorest and the lowest. Christ's kingdom is full of heavenly paradoxes. Even the poor working man, with his hard palms, sits at the marriage supper with the king and princes; it may be he sits higher than his earthly lord. There is a courtesy, and a mutual observance, which is the peculiar dignity and sweetness of a Christian; and the source of it is, that He sees the presence of His Lord in others, and reveres Him in himself. Only the true Christian can have real self-respect. From this springs purity of manners, language, conversation, and amusements in private and social life.

III. And one more thought we may take from this blessed mystery,—I mean, with what veneration and devotion we ought to behave ourselves towards the presence of Christ, in the Sacrament of His body and Blood.

H. E. MANNING, *Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 190.

THE Atonement.

I. In Christ's sacrifice there was no earthly altar, no expiatory form, no visible priest; nobody could have told, either from His life or from His death, that He was the victim; He died by the natural course of events, as the effect of a holy and courageous life operating upon the intense jealousy of a class; He died by civil punishment, and in heaven that death pleaded as the sacrifice that taketh away the sin of the world. But that sacrifice was a willing, a self-offered sacrifice. The circum-

stance, then, of the victim being self-offered, makes, in the first place, all the difference upon the question of injustice to the victim. He who is sent is one in being with Him who sends. His willing submission, therefore, is not the willing submission of a mere man to one who is in a human sense another; but it is the act of one who, by submitting to another, submits to himself. By virtue of His unity with the Father, the Son originates, carries on, and completes Himself the work of the Atonement. It is His own original will to do this, His own spontaneous undertaking.

II. Consider the effect of the act of the Atonement upon the sinner. It will be seen, then, that with respect to this effect, the willingness of a sacrifice changes the mode of the operation of a sacrifice, so that it acts on a totally different principle and law from that upon which a sacrifice of mere substitution rests. The Gospel puts before us the doctrine of the Atonement in this light, that the mercy of the Father is called out toward man by our Lord Jesus Christ's generous sacrifice of Himself on behalf of man. The act of one produces this result in the mind of God towards another; the act of a suffering Mediator reconciles God to the guilty. But neither in natural mediation, nor in supernatural, does the act of suffering love, in producing that change of regard to which it tends, dispense with the moral change in the criminal. We cannot, of course, because a good man suffers for a criminal, alter our regards for him if he obstinately continues a criminal. And if the gospel taught any such thing in the doctrine of atonement, that would certainly expose itself to the charge of immorality. So rooted is the great principle of mediation in nature, that the mediatorship of Christ cannot be revealed to us without reminding us of a whole world of analogous action, and a representation of action. It is this rooted idea of a mediator in the human heart which is so sublimely displayed in the sacred crowds of St. John's Revelation. The multitude which no man can number are indeed there, all holy; all kings and priests are consecrated and elect. But the individual greatness of all is consummated in One who is in the centre of the whole, Him who is the need of the whole race, who leads it, who has saved it, its King and Representative, the First-born of the whole creation, and the Redeemer of it. Toward Him all faces are turned; and it is as when a vast army fixes its look upon a great commander in whom it glories, who on some festival day is placed conspicuously in the midst. The air of heaven is

perfumed with the fragrance of an altar, and animated with the glory of a great conquest. The victory of the Mediator never ceases, and all triumph in Him.

J. B. MOZLEY, *University Sermons*, p. 162.

REFERENCES: x. 5.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., pp. 275, 413. x. 5-7.—G. Huntingdon, *Sermons for Holy Seasons*, p. 161; J. Thain Davidson, *Sure to Succeed*, p. 61.

Chap. x., vers. 5-18.

OUR Perfection.

I. Perfection is now given to all who believe God Himself is our salvation. Jehovah Himself is our righteousness. Christ's inheritance is our inheritance. The source is eternal love, self-moved, infinite, ocean without shore; the channel is free, abounding grace; the gift is eternal life, even life by the Holy Ghost in oneness with Jesus. The foundation is the obedience of Christ, eternal in its origin, infinite in its value, and unspeakably God-pleasing in its character.

II. The word "perfected" falls with a strange sound on those who are experiencing daily their sad imperfections.. But the Christian is a strange paradox. You may be caught up into the third heaven, and yet the abundance of this revelation will not burn up the dross that is in you, or kill the old man, the flesh which warreth against the spirit. On the contrary, there is the danger, imminent and great, lest you be exalted above measure, and dream of victory and enjoyment while you are still on the battlefield. We have died once with Christ, and with Christ are accepted and perfect; but our old nature is not dead, the flesh in us is not annihilated; there is still within us that which has no pleasure in the will and ways of God. We sin, we fall, we carry about with us a mind resisting God's will, criticising it, and rebelling, and we shall experience to the very last breath we draw on earth that there is a conflict, and that we must strive and suffer in order to be faithful unto death. So we confess daily our errors and our sins, and condemn ourselves whenever we appear before God; yet are we perfect in Christ Jesus. Deeper than all our grief is the melody of the heart, and always can we rejoice in God.

A. SAPHIR, *Lectures on Hebrews*, vol. ii., p. 187.

Chap. x., ver. 7.—"Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me,) to do Thy will, O God."

I. THE life of our Lord Jesus Christ is the most beautiful life that has ever been lived in the world. All sorts of beauty were

bright in Him. The beauty of virtue, the beauty of godliness, the beauty of love, the beauty of sympathy, the beauty of obedience, and this without crack or flaw; beauty which shone in the house, beauty which flamed in the temple, beauty which lighted up the cornfield and the wayside, beauty which graced alike the table of the publican and the Pharisee, beauty with smiles and tears, gifts and helps for men, women, and children as He found them. Ever radiant, ever beneficent. In the old pictures they used to paint Him with a gloriole or nimbus round His head, and had we seen Him anywhere, from cradle to cross, from tomb to cloud, in a trice we should have picked Him out from all others for His very beauty.

II. One great reason why that beautiful life has been lived amongst us men is that we may make our lives beautiful by it. There is nothing in Christ that is foreign to us. He was a man amongst men. All His beauty is capable of translation into our lives. Nothing in Him was superfluous in us. Nothing that was in Him can we lack without leaving void or chasm in our being.

III. The secret of this most beautiful life of our Lord Jesus Christ is told us. The will of God was to Him an irresistible spell. By it He accepted all tasks, and achieved them; by it He faced all sufferings, and endured them. No other explanation of His life is needed. Its strength, its unity, its manifold beauty are all intelligible now. The great secret is out. He came to do the will of God.

IV. What a beautiful will the will of God must be if the beautiful life of Christ is simply its outcome. If we would make our life beautiful like that of Christ, we must daily study the will of God, and just be and do what that will ordains. This is the one grand law of time and eternity, of earth and heaven.

G. B. JOHNSON, *The Beautiful Life of Christ*, p. 1.

REFERENCE: x. 7.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 96.

Chap. x., vers. 7-10.—"According to the good pleasure of His will," etc.

I. THE election of God is that ocean of love which surrounds our earthly Christian life as an island, and which we can never lose out of sight for any length of time. Is it not our ultimate refuge in our weakness, our afflictions, our trials? Thus we ascend to the eternal counsel of God, whether we consider the character of the Gospel dispensation in its relation to the law, or the Divine righteousness and life through faith in the crucified Saviour, or the work of grace in conversion, or the spiritual

experience of the believer. Infinite love from all eternity purposed to clothe us with Divine and perfect righteousness, to endow us with an incorruptible inheritance, and this through the gift and the self-devotedness of the Son.

II. Of the eternal counsel of God, Jesus crucified is the centre and the manifestation. He came to offer unto God that which sacrifice and burnt-offering could only shadow forth. In the sin-offering, death, due to the offerer, was transferred to the sacrifice; in the burnt-offering one already accepted professed his will to offer himself wholly unto the will of God. How perfectly and above all finite conception was this twofold sacrifice fulfilled in Christ!

III. From all eternity God, according to His good pleasure, which He had purposed in Himself, chose us in Christ that we should be to the praise of His glory. Notice the expression "good pleasure." It is God's eternal delight, this purpose of self-manifestation in grace; His counsel and election centre in the Son of His love, in the Only-begotten. It is according to this same good pleasure, to this same eternal, free, infinite delight, that God calls and converts souls through the foolishness of preaching; that He gives unto us the adoption of children, and the forgiveness of sins; it is the Father's good pleasure to keep the little flock, and afterwards to give them the kingdom and the glory, together to Jesus.

A. SAPHIR, *Lectures on Hebrews*, vol. ii., p. 186.

Chap. x., vers. 8, 9.—"Above when He said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law," etc.

ATONEMENT.

If an innocent man should suffer, what is the common verdict of the world? It says, "There is a crime beneath the seeming innocence, or he would not suffer." The book of Job gives the Old Testament answer to this blind opinion. The complete answer is in the death and suffering of Jesus. It has been written there for all the world to read, that this stupid maxim is wrong; suffering does *not* prove God's anger, nor prove the sufferer's sin. If increase of love were possible, never did the Father so deeply love the Son of man as at the hour of the cross; if increase of righteousness were possible, never was Jesus more sinless than in that hour of human agony and apparent defeat.

I. Christ did *not* come to tell us that God needed to be

reconciled to us, but that we needed to reconcile ourselves to Him. Christ did not come to die for us, the innocent for the guilty, that God's justice might be satisfied, and because of this satisfaction be enabled to show mercy to us. He came to die that He might make us feel, through the intensity of His human love, how much God loved us, and make us understand that God's justice, though it punished, was final mercy. Christ did not come to enable God to forgive us, He came to tell us that God had forgiven us.

II. The things which belong to the law of atonement are not theological dreams, woven out of the intellect, not parts of a scheme; they are developments of human powers natural to man, things possible to his nature, growing out of the common life of man; ideas, but practical ideas; the flower, according to law, of plants in the garden of human nature. Christ manifested these powers, showed that they were practical and possible, made us understand that we could blossom also into this perfection. And that was another way in which He brought salvation to us, took away our sins, and justly earned the title of Redeemer. His revelation reconciles us to God; reconciles man to man; reconciles man to suffering.

S. A. Brooke, *The Unity of God and Man*, p. 82.

References: x. 9.—G. Dawson, *Sermons on Disputed Points*, p. 73; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 319; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 18. x. 10.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxvi., No. 1527; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. x., p. 145. x. 11.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xviii., No. 1034.

Chap. x., ver. 12.—"This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God."

The Lessons of the Cross.

Our Lord's suffering is also

I. Our example. How powerful the force of that teaching has been; how deep it has sunk into human nature's heart. Here is He who was man, and yet was God. As God He could not die, but He stooped to death in the inferior nature. There is no limit to the force of this example. He has burst the gap through the gloomy barrier that fenced in the human life; He has let in light where all was dark before. His footsteps shine before us on the way, and the more rugged and painful the ground, the more firmly are they printed, the more deeply traceable.

II. But, again, the death of Christ witnesses to truth. All prophecy and its fulfilment, all teaching and its verification in

the life of man, is less convincing than the tale of the cross. It proves to us the truth in practice, that the will of God is the law and life to man. Life eternal is our object, and therefore suffering is our business.

III. The cross of Christ is our greatest lesson in moral teaching. It teaches us under this head, (1) the immense value of our souls, and (2) the heinousness of sin as the bane and scourge of those souls.

IV. And, lastly, it is our bond of union. He died to gather together in one the Church of God which is scattered abroad, to become the Good Shepherd of those far-off sheep, to bring them home to Him and to each other. The Church of God is the result, imperfect, scantily realised, and in idea so wide and so prominent, so historically grand, so socially vast, that its failure—so far as it has failed—is forced into prominence which meaner things could not reach. But the Church of God in its imperfections does but sum up and contain the total of the shortcomings of its members. They are Christ's members still; He counts them as such, and we may count them as such.

H. HAYMAN, *Rugby Sermons*, p. 214.

Chap. x., ver. 12.—"One sacrifice for sins for ever."

I. THERE is an exceeding grandeur—approaching to awe—about everything which can be done only once. This is a great part of the grandeur of death, and of the judgment in their nature, they can be only once. And the atonement is the more grand because it is of the same character. The cross is magnificently fearful in its perfect isolation. Everything in religious truth, which went before it in ages past, looked on to it. Everything in religious truth which has ever followed, and in ages yet to come, looks back to it. It is the bud of all, the beginning of all, the sum of all.

I. We make sacrifices, and what are they? If we think, in any sense whatever, to offer up anything in the slightest degree propitiatory for sin, we plainly violate the whole Bible. We offer three things: our praises, our duties, and ourselves. These are our only sacrifices. And what makes these things sacrifices? The Christ that is in them. So that still, be we of the Jewish or the Christian dispensation, the same thing is true—there is "one sacrifice for sins for ever."

II. Remember, that marvellous as is the region of the thought in which we are walking when we treat of the atonement, it is all in accordance with the most perfect sense of our under-

standing, and all lies within the strictest limit of perfect justice; nay, its foundation is justice, and it commends itself to every man's judgment as soon as he sees it. But such a view as a prospective forgiveness of future sin would violate every principle of common sense. Holiness is the great end of the cross. Pardon, peace, salvation, happiness, are only means—means to holiness; holiness, which is the image of God, which is the glory of God. Beware of any approach to any view of Christ which does not directly tend to personal holiness. For He perfects—whom? Them that are sanctified.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 5th series, p. 138.

REFERENCES: x. 12.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. x., p. 230. x. 12, 13.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. ii., No. 91.

Chap. x., vers. 12-14.—"This man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God," etc.

THE Only Sacrifice.

There is, and there can be, only one atonement for the sin of the world—the sacrifice of the death of Christ. This alone is in itself meritorious, propitiatory, and of infinite price and power. And this is, in fact, the whole argument of the Epistle to the Hebrews. St. Paul is showing that the law of Moses was in itself without power; that it could make no propitiation, no true atonement in the eternal world; that the vileness of the sacrifices was enough to show their impotence, and much more their continual repetition.

I. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ, then, is one. There is no other like it, or second after it. It is not the highest of a kind, or the perfecting of any order of oblations; but, like His Person, a mystery sole and apart. In what does this unity consist? In the nature, the quality and the passion of Him who offered Himself. (1) It is one and unapproachable, because He was a Divine Person, both God and man. (2) In like manner the sacrifice is one and above all, in the quality of the person who, as God, was holy, as man was sinless. It was not the obedience only of man for man, but of man without sin; nor only a sinless man for sinners, but the obedience of God. (3) And, further, as the nature and the quality, so the passion of Christ gives to His sacrifice an unity of transcendent perfection. Righteous, holy, pure, perfect in love both to God and man, He offered Himself up as a sacrifice and atonement between God and man. This, then, is its unity.

II. But, further, the sacrifice is not only one, but continuous

As by its unity it abolished the multitude of oblations, so by its continuity it abolished the repetition of sacrifices. To add one more would be to deny its final atonement. The sacrifice of Christ is as everlasting as His Person. He was pierced on Calvary, but His passion is still before the mercy-seat. He was pierced eighteen hundred years ago, but His blood was shed four thousand years before, and His wounds are fresh and atoning until now. His sacrifice is eternal. Though every light in the firmament of heaven were a world, and every world dead in sin; and though time should multiply the generations of sinners for ever, yet that one sacrifice for sin would infinitely redeem all worlds.

H. E. MANNING, *Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 210.

Chap. x., ver. 14.—"By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

CHRIST our Priest.

The Epistle to the Hebrews represents Christ as our High Priest, and His office as a priesthood; as a priesthood in the two great parts of the priestly character, sacrifice and intercession or mediation. And it declares, also, that this is the only priest, and the only priesthood which the gospel acknowledges.

I. Christ, then, by one offering, hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. By one offering, namely, the offering of Himself upon the cross, for the sins of the whole world. By this offering we are perfected, and without it we were lost. Undoubtedly these few words are the very sum and substance of the gospel. Every heart, however constituted, with all our manifold varieties of power and disposition, can yet find in Christ that which will better suit its peculiar nature than anything to be found elsewhere; all of us, if we could truly believe in Christ should assuredly find that our faith had saved us.

II. He has perfected us; that is, the work is complete, if we would but believe it; but till we do believe it, it is in us not completed. It is complete in us when our hearts are softened, and God and Christ and our own sin are fully before us; but as they pass away, so it becomes again undone. It becomes undone, because then we do not believe. Another belief is ruling in our hearts; the belief that we may follow our own ways, and live safely without God. But when we believe in God, the Father of Christ, we shall know and feel what is meant by infinite holiness and infinite love; and by the one offering of our High

Priest once offered, we shall feel that we who were dead are made alive—that we are now for ever perfected.

T. ARNOLD, *Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 78.

REFERENCES: x. 14.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. v., No. 232; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 224; vol. vi., p. 153. x. 15-18.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xii., No. 714; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 47. x. 17.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxviii., No. 1685. x. 19.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. viii., p. 361. x. 19, 20.—Bishop Thorold, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 81; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. x., p. 144. x. 19-22.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 266; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 463.

Chap. x., vers. 19-25.

FAITH, Hope, and Love.

I. The Apostle's great argument is concluded, and the result is placed before us in a very short summary. We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way; and we have in the heavenly sanctuary a great Priest over the house of God. On this foundation rests a threefold exhortation. (1) Let us draw near with a true heart, in the full assurance of faith. (2) Let us hold fast the profession of hope without wavering. (3) Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works. Faith, hope, and love—this is the threefold result of Christ's entrance into heaven, spiritually discerned, and a believing, hoping, and loving attitude of heart corresponds to the new covenant relation of Divine grace.

II. In times of persecution or lukewarmness, Christian fellowship is specially important; it is likewise a test of our faithfulness. The Hebrews, it seems, needed this word of exhortation; and the Apostle confirms it by the solemn addition, "Forasmuch as ye see the day approaching." The Apostle refers, doubtless, to the approaching judgment of Jerusalem, connecting it, according to the law of prophetic vista, with the final crisis. Because the Lord is at hand we are to be patient, loving, gentle,—exercising forbearance towards our brother, while examining with strict care our own work.

III. The second advent of our Lord is the most powerful, as well as the most constraining motive. Called to eternal fellowship and love in joy and glory, let us fulfil the ministry of love in suffering and service, and let every day see some help and consolation given to our fellow-pilgrims. Christians see the day approaching, for they love Christ's appearing; and to them the day of light is not far off. Jesus said, "I come quickly," and

the long delay of centuries does not contradict this "quickly." Christ is looking forward unto His return and to nothing else.

A. SAPHIR, *Lectures on Hebrews*, vol. ii., p. 219.

Chap. x., ver. 22.—"Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."

SINS of Ignorance and Weakness.

Among the reasons which may be assigned for the observance of prayer at stated times, there is one which is very obvious, and yet perhaps is not so carefully remembered and acted upon as it should be. I mean the necessity of sinners cleansing themselves from time to time of the ever-accumulating guilt which loads their consciences. We cannot, by one act of faith, establish ourselves for ever after in the favour of God. The text is addressed to Christians, to the regenerate; yet so far from their regeneration having cleansed them once for all, they are bid ever to sprinkle the blood of Christ upon their consciences, and renew, as it were, their baptism, and so continuously appear before the presence of Almighty God.

I. First consider our present condition, as shown us in Scripture. Christ has not changed this, though He has died; it is as it was from the beginning—I mean our natural state as men. We are changed *one by one*; the race of man is what it ever was, guilty—what it was before Christ came. The taint of death is upon us, and surely we shall be stifled by the encompassing plague, unless God from day to day vouchsafes to make us clean.

II. Again, reflect on the habits of sin which we superadded to our evil nature before we turned to God. Here is another source of continual defilement. Through the sins of our youth, the power of the flesh is exerted against us, as a second creative principle of evil, aiding the malice of the devil.

III. Further, consider how many sins are involved in our obedience, I may say from the mere necessity of the case: that is, from not having that more clear-sighted and vigorous faith which would enable us accurately to discern, and closely to follow the way of life. We attempt great things with the necessity of failing, and yet the necessity of attempting; and so *while* we attempt, need continual forgiveness for the failure of the attempt. How inexpressibly needful to relieve ourselves of the evil that weighs upon the heart, by drawing near to God in

full assurance of faith, and washing away our guilt by the expiation which He has appointed.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. i., p. 83.

REFERENCES: x. 23.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxxii., No. 1897. x. 23, 24.—J. B. Heard, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xv., p. 344. x. 23-25.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 464.

Chap. x., ver. 24.—"And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works."

I. "WORKS." Work is the condition of life in the world. The law of both kingdoms alike is, "If any man will not work, neither should he eat." Work has been made a necessity in the constitution of nature, and declared a duty in the positive precepts of Scripture. Idleness is both sin and misery. Everything is working. A non-productive class is an anomaly in creation. Christ was a worker. He went about *doing*. The world is a field. It must be subdued and made the garden of the Lord.

II. *Good* works. It is not any work that will please God or be profitable to man. A bustling life will not make heaven sure. The works must be good in design and character. The motive must be pure, and the effect beneficent. Good works rendered by Christians to Christ, put forth upon a needy world, are not dangerous things. Christians should not be jealous, but zealous of good works. The Lord requires them; disciples render them; the world needs them.

III. *Love* and good works. Verily good works constitute a refreshing stream in the world wherever they are found flowing. It is a pity that they are too often like Oriental torrents, waters that fail in the time of need.

IV. *Provoke* unto love and good works. All the really effective machinery for doing good in the world depends for propulsion on the love that glows in human breasts; with all the revival of our own favoured times, the wheels, clogged with the thick clay of a predominating selfishness, move but slowly. Up with the impelling love into greater warmth, that it may put forth greater power.

V. "Consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works." It is the considerer, not the considered, who is provoked unto love. What attitude must we assume, and what preparation must we make, in order that love by the ministry of the Spirit may be kindled in our heart? Here is the prescription short and plain, "Consider one another."

W. ARNOT, *Roots and Fruits*, p. 51.

Mutual Consideration.

I. Mutual consideration is to be a cultivated influence. By that I mean, that consideration is not necessarily natural to children, although it is to some. There is an inborn selfishness in most children ; yet some little folks seem to be dowered with thoughtful faculties which they have inherited. Even children can be like Christ, living in others. Consideration is to be cultivated ; and the child's nature, through Christ's renewing grace, will grow into carefulness about his neighbours, and about everybody.

II. Mutual consideration is to be a provocative influence. "Consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works." Why has the word "provoke" got to have an ugly meaning? Why, in the same way that the word "retaliation" has. Because men oftener retaliate injuries than benefits! If I were to announce a sermon on "Retaliation," most people would think that I meant to preach against the retaliation of injuries, forgetting the fact that a man can retaliate a benefit just as well as an injury! How can you provoke unto love? It cannot be done by speech, unless that speech is translated into deed. So the Apostle says, "Provoking one another." When you see the speech translated into the deed, then you have the provocative power. The attractive power of life is in character, not in word only; and be thankful, those of you who are engaged in mission work, that you do not know all the results, for the might of influence has provoked some people you have never seen. This is the grandest thought to take away with us; that something which occurred twenty years ago may be provoking another invitation to-day, for good deeds never die; they walk the earth when we are dead and gone.

III. Mutual consideration is to be a Church influence. Consideration is the element that is to change the world. The cross living in us, and transfiguring us, will take away all those elements in our life which make us Pharisaic towards sinners, proud of our virtues, selfish in our thoughts and aims, hard in our judgments, and vulgar in our manners.

W. M. Statham, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxv., p. 92.

References: x. 24.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 135; T. G. Bonney, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 225. x. 25.—C. P. Reichel, *Ibid.*, vol. xiii., p. 133; *Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. i., p. 588; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxvi., p. 216; W. Scott, *Ibid.*, vol. xxix., p. 56; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. x., p. 289. x. 26.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 465.

Chap. x., vers. 26-39.

WARNING against Apostasy.

I. Note briefly some misconceptions which prevent some readers of Scripture from receiving in a meek and docile spirit solemn admonitions of the Holy Ghost, such as the present. (1) There is an undue and one-sided haste to be happy and in the enjoyment of comfort. (2) There is a one-sided and unscriptural forgetfulness of the true position of the believer, as a man who is still on the road, in the battle; who has still the responsibility of trading with the talent entrusted, and watching for the return of the Master. (3) We must remember that God, in the Gospel and in the outward Church, deals with mankind, and not merely with the elect known only unto Him. The warning is necessary, for the actual condition of the Church embraces false professors. It is necessary and salutary for all, for young and weak believers, as well as for the most experienced. It is, above all, *true*; for the gospel reveals to us the living and holy God, the earnestness and jealousy, as well as the tenderness of Divine love.

II. Mark the bearing of the passage on the mere professor of Christianity. If we follow our deceitful and sluggish hearts, we neither rejoice in God's promises, nor tremble at His threatenings. The world knows not the sweetness of Divine love, nor does it stand in awe before God's wrath. And professing Christians also may forget that our God is a consuming fire, and that we must either serve Him with all our heart, or depart from Him as evil-doers. God sends now the message of peace; but this message rests on the full manifestation, and not upon a change of his character. And hence the gospel brings to him who, in fear and trembling, and with faith, accepts it, salvation, blood-bought, and wrought into us by a total and central renewal of our hearts; whereas it brings to him who rejects it a fuller disclosure of God's wrath, and a sterner announcement of everlasting perdition.

A. SAPHIR, *Lectures on Hebrews*, vol. ii., p. 237.

REFERENCES: x. 28, 29.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. viii., p. 258. x. 30.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. x., p. 84.

Chap. x., ver. 31.—"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

THE Judgments of God.

I. This is, of all the revelations of Scripture, the one which men can least bear. They would fain find something of hope,

something of mitigation, even in the heaviest sentence of God's anger. They would fain believe that all shall be well at the last. Most natural is it for flesh and blood so to wish; most natural that the strong wish should labour to become belief. But the declaration of God's truth is in His own Scriptures clear and full; no man can mistake, no man can dispute its meaning. Can that be inconsistent with God's mercy which is declared by Him who laid down His life for us?

II. The real Christian faith in Christ's promises and Christ's threatenings is what we all require daily. Where is the man of us, however earnestly he may love Christ's words, who can pretend that he believes them with the same undoubting faith that he could do if he knew and loved Christ better? Conceive, if that were the case, how entire would be our confidence in all God's words; how steadily should we look beyond the grave, and see the river's further shore. For what makes death clear or dark to us is exactly our greater or less knowledge of God, a knowledge that if we are with Him we shall be safe and happy, whether it be in life or death. And it is a knowledge also of His terrors, that it is indeed a fearful thing to find ourselves in His hands for the first time when He comes with judgment. Here we knew Him not, and therefore carelessly offended Him; but there we must know Him, and shall find that the evil done or the good not done to one of the least of our brethren was a wrong or a neglect to Him.

T. ARNOLD, *Sermons*, vol. vi., p. 253.

REFERENCES: x. 31.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xii., No. 682; R. L. Browne, *Sussex Sermons*, p. 241. x. 32.—E. White, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxx., p. 72; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xiii., p. 200. x. 34-37.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. i., p. 222. x. 35.—H. F. Walker, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 341; J. B. Brown, *Ibid.*, vol. xxiii., p. 113. x. 35, 36.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 378; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 210. x. 36.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxi., pp. 27, 68; H. P. Liddon, *Ibid.*, vol. xxv., p. 136.

Chap. x., ver. 38.—"Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him."

TRANSGRESSIONS and Infirmities.

Warnings such as these would not be contained in Scripture were there no danger of our drawing back, and thereby losing that life in God's presence which faith secures to us. Faith is the tenure upon which the Divine life is continued to us: by faith the Christian lives, but if he draws backs he dies; his faith

profits him nothing, or, rather, his drawing back to sin is a reversing of his faith, after which God has no pleasure in him. Faith keeps us from transgressions, and they who transgress, for that very reason, have not true and lively faith, and therefore it avails them nothing that faith, as Scripture says, is imputed to Christians for righteousness, for they have not faith. Instead of faith blotting out transgressions, transgressions blot out faith. Faith, if it be true and lively, both precludes transgressions, and gradually triumphs over infirmities; and, while infirmities continue, it regards them with so perfect an hatred, as avails for their forgiveness, and is taken for that righteousness which it is gradually becoming.

I. There are sins which forfeit a state of grace. (1) All habits of vice are such. (2) It is fearful to think that covetousness is mentioned in connection with sins of the flesh, as incurring forfeiture of grace equally with them. (3) All violent breaches of the law of charity are inconsistent with a state of grace; and, in like manner, all profaneness, heresy, and false worship, and, further, hardness of heart or going against light.

II. That there are sins of infirmity, or such as do not throw the soul out of a state of salvation, is evident directly it is granted that there are sins which do; for no one will pretend to say that all sins exclude from grace, else no one can be saved, for there is no one who is sinless.

III. These sins of infirmity tend to those which are greater, and forfeit grace. Never suffer sin to remain upon you; let it not grow old in you; wipe it off while it is fresh, else it will stain; let it not get ingrained; let it not eat its way in and rust in you; come continually to the Fount of cleansing for cleansing. It is thus that the Church of God, it is thus that each individual member of it, becomes all glorious within and full of grace.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. v., p. 195.

REFERENCES: x. 38.—W. M. Statham, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 248; H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, vol. xvii., p. 164; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 567. x. 38, 39.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. viii., p. 132.

Chap. xi., ver. 1.—"Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

FAITH and Things Hoped for and Unseen.

I. Faith appears at first sight a very simple thing; it is nothing else but believing the word of God. We know what it is to receive the word of a man, to believe statements, thought

strange and surpassing our experience, because we regard the character of him who makes them with respect and confidence. But then, remember, as God is greater than man, as God's word is heaven, high above any human word, so the reception of this word, the believing of this word, is necessarily something quite different from the reception of any human word or testimony. As is the voice, so is the echo; as is the seal, so is the impression; as is the word or revelation, so is the faith. The Divine word produces in the heart of man faith, which is Divine in its nature and power. To assent to the word of God is therefore to enter into a perfectly new life, a perfectly new mode of power and existence.

II. True faith takes hold of the Divine word; it is weak or strong, great or small, as it receives, keeps, and uses, the word of God. The source of weak faith is in the ignorance and slowness of the heart with reference to the Divine testimony. The strength of faith is the humility of a helpless and broken heart cleaving to the promise. There was one who, next to the apostles, was perhaps the greatest gift of God to the Church, whom we all admire for his faith. And yet Martin Luther was wont to say, "Oh, if I had faith!" And often he confessed that, unless every day he read the Scriptures, and meditated on Christ, and repeated the Creed, and prayed the Psalms, his heart became dead and cold, full of dark and hard thoughts of God, and of dreary and tormenting doubts and fears. Let us dwell, then, on Christ; let us consider Him in steadfast, frequent, daily meditation; let the word of Christ dwell richly in our hearts, minds, and homes.

A. SAPHIR, *Lectures on Hebrews*, vol. ii., p. 257.

FAITH.

Ages, like individuals, have their besetting sins, and prominent among those of the present day is faithlessness. We have many excellent characteristics, without doubt; we should be inhuman if it were not so. We are earnest after our fashion, enterprising, intellectually veracious, humane, liberal, tolerant; but underneath, and behind all this, we are emphatically a faithless generation. The one thing conspicuous by its absence from our social and political dealings, from our literature, from our art, from our thought, from the conduct of our lives, is faith; and yet, "whatsoever is not of faith is sin," and "without faith it is impossible to please God."

I. Consider what faith is. We too often think and speak of

it as a speculative faculty, co-ordinate with reason, and differing from reason only in being concerned with a different subject-matter; as if, while reason assures us that honesty is the best policy, or that probability is the guide of life, or that the laws of nature are uniform, faith supplies us with similar judgments about God, and spirit, and immortality; judgments that is, which may or may not have an important bearing on our lives, but which are exhausted, as far as faith is concerned, by the intelligent recital of the orthodox creed. But this is not St. Paul's view. Sight, intuition, vision, by whatever name you call it, is a higher thing than reason, for it is that in which reason ends; and faith is higher than even sight, for it is sight become creative. It sees in darkness, believes without evidence, is certain of impossibilities, grapples with and forces the blank, dark, empty nothingness into substance, and consistency, and reality, and life; it is the reflection, almost too bright for frail human nature, of the Divine power that can create *ex nihilo*.

II. Why is it that when our health, and wealth, and time, and opportunity, are not actively misused for evil, they are so often frittered away? Simply for want of faith. You start in life with high ideas and an exuberance of energy, but you have not courage to bring the two into relation—*i.e.*, you have not faith. Your ideas are like the visions that float before the artist: they are unreal to begin with; but you are endowed with a creative faculty, and you can call them into existence by the bare fact of your faith. You can *make* them what they are not, as the heroes and saints have done before you, but you *will* not, and so you allow the God-sent vision of your destiny to fade away unfulfilled, till in the end it will be nothing more to you than the melancholy memory of some sunrise long ago.

J. R. Illingworth, *Sermons*, p. 116.

Faith.

I. Faith is here opposed to sight. It is, in the first place, the resting of the soul upon the unseen. This, the writer says, has been the common feature of all great, heroic, saintly deeds and lives. He draws his illustrations from the history of the race to which he writes. Every one whose name was great in its history, its founders, legislators, rulers; its warriors, and its martyrs; its prophets, and its poets; those without its limits who had helped it in days of adversity; all had one common characteristic. They had looked beyond what they could see. They had believed in the future, in the possible, in powers of which their senses gave them no assurance.

II. Faith is the vivid life-moving realisation of the unseen, the distant, the ideal. It is not the same as hope, but it is the spring of hope—that on which hope rests—the substance, the reality of things hoped for. In this sense it colours all history. It gives to all life its beauty, its romance, its spiritual energy. The faith of which the chapter speaks is generally not merely the faculty, the will, to see beyond the present and the visible; it is the eye open to the sun of the unseen world.

III. Let me suggest two thoughts on this point: (1) That we do well to feed our imaginations and fortify our instincts by gathering, by dwelling upon, even as the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews dwells upon pictures of this virtue of heroes. This is the great good to us of poetry, and of the great scenes of history. (2) This is one thought; the other is that we should each strive to see, if we may use the paradox, the *unseen* side, the ideal side of our work. That dream-world is the true, the real world. All those visions of beauty—truth and love and justice—are not phantoms of our brains, but the outlines dimly seen of One infinitely perfect, by whom and in whom are we and all things.

E. C. WICKHAM, *Wellington College Sermons*, p. 42.

FAITH.

I. Faith is that feeling or faculty within us by which the future becomes to our minds greater than the present; and that which we do not see, more powerful to influence us than what we do see. It is very true, that if we knew nothing of God, still there would be the same feeling of preferring the future and the unseen to the present; and this feeling, wherever it rested, would raise and improve the mind. But the moment that we are told of God, we see that He is an object of faith, far more excellent than any other, and that it is when directed towards Him that the feeling can be brought towards its full perfection.

II. It is a very necessary part of faith that the thing which we believe be told us by some one whom we have reason for believing—some one whom we know to be, so far as we are concerned, good and wise. The moment we are told of God,—so perfect in wisdom, so perfect in goodness, so perfect in power—we find One on whose assurance we may rely with a most certain trust, and whose commands will be as good and wise, as the fulfilment of His threats will be sure. Again, it is a great trial of faith when the good or the evil expected is distant, and still greater when it is not only distant, but imperfectly understood.

Now the good or evil which God promises and threatens to Christians is so distant, that it will only come after our earthly lives are over; it is so imperfectly understood, that eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man to conceive, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him; nor yet, I may add, the wrath which He has prepared for those who do not love Him. So then, faith in God, in His promises, and His threatenings, seems to be perfect in all the points required to perfect it.

T. ARNOLD, *Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 1.

REFERENCES: xi. 1.—R. W. Dale, *The Jewish Temple and the Christian Church*, p. 242; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. v., p. 175; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., pp. 163, 170; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 305; *Homilist*, 1st series, vol. iv., p. 338; *Ibid.*, 2nd series, vol. ii., p. 587; C. J. Vaughan, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. viii., pp. 286, 296. i. 1-10.—E. W. Shalders, *Ibid.*, pp. 298, 317, 325, 349, 356; H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, vol. xvi., p. 28; *Ibid.*, vol. xxiii., pp. 31-40; A. Mursell, *Ibid.*, vol. xviii., p. 248; G. Macdonald, *Ibid.*, vol. xxi., p. 385. xi. 1-3.—*Ibid.*, vol. xvii., p. 264; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. vii., p. 191.

Chap. xi., ver. 3.—**"Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."**

FAITH in God the Creator.

I. Reason *cannot* ascend from nature to nature's God. The most comprehensive observation of things seen, and of which we can take cognisance, and the most minute analysis of things with the most remote and simple elements, leave the question of creation or the origin of things perfectly untouched and unapproached. The step from matter to mind, from things which appear to that which is the cause, spring, origin of all, is one which reason cannot take. God reveals it; we believe.

II. We believe that God is, for He has spoken to us; He has loved us, He has redeemed us. He was Abraham's guest and guide, his sure portion, and exceeding great reward. He brought Israel out of Egypt. He spoke unto the fathers as unto His chosen friends. Jehovah reveals to us that He is the Lord, the Creator of heaven and of earth; that He made all things by the word of His power. He reveals to us that all things were made by His Son, and for Him, who is appointed Heir of all things; that not atoms, or an original matter, but Christ, is the beginning of creation, in whom all His counsel stood before Him from all eternity.

III. God is the Creator; this is the first note struck on the

lyre of Revelation, with which all other strains are in harmony. It sounds throughout the whole anthem. In Christ we hear the full melody; in Him we behold both the eternal counsel of redemption, and the final consummation in glory. Such are the apparently simple but inexhaustible and ever-blessed revelation truths for the sinner seeking salvation, for the Christian in affliction, in temptation; for the day of warfare, the night of sorrow, the hour of death.

A. SAPHIR, *Lectures on Hebrews*, vol. ii., p. 273.

REFERENCE: xi. 3.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. vi., p. 334.

Chap. xi., ver. 4.—"By faith."

THE Work of the Few and the Many.

The history of mankind, whether secular or religious, resolves itself into the history of a few individuals. It is not that all the rest do not live their own lives, or can shirk their own eternal responsibilities; but it is that the march and movement of the many is as surely influenced by the genius of the few as is the swing of the tide by the law of gravitation. It is a law of our being that we should belong—the vast majority of us—to the unknown, to the unrecorded masses, who, long before the very things we own have perished, shall have passed away out of all remembrance as utterly as though we had never been.

I. There, then, is one great fact of life; another, and a far sadder one, is that, by a sort of fatal gravitation, the human race seems of itself to tend downwards. It is impulse, passion, temptation, more than reason, that often sways the heart of each man, and therefore of all men. It is the few only who are saints; the few only who are heroes.

II. How does God carry out His work of continuous redemption? It is by the energy of His chosen few. Into their hearts He pours the power of His Spirit; upon their heads He lays the hands of His consecration. The history of mankind is like the history of Israel in the days of the Judges. The deliverance of mankind has never been wrought by the multitude; always by the individual.

III. We learn from this subject: (1) the secret, the sole secret, of moral power. Who that reads the signs of the times can fail to perceive how much this age needs to learn the secret. By faith, each in his age and order, these saints of God delivered his generation, inspired his successors, wrought righteousness in a faithless world. (2) We may notice also that the work of these saints of God, being always and necessarily human, is never

permanent in its special results. There is an infinite pathos in the predestined failure of men and institutions which leave no adequate heirs to propagate their impulse, to carry on their purposes. Abraham dies, and in a century his descendants are slaves. When the influence of God's saints has spent its force, if the work pauses for a moment, everything falls into ruin and corruption. Only as an inspiring, passionate, continuous energy can Christianity regenerate the world. (3) These apparent failures were never absolute. No good man, no saint of God, has ever lived or died in vain. The very best of us leaves his tale half untold, his message imperfect; but if we have but been faithful, then, because of us, some one who follows us with a happier heart and in happier times, shall utter our message better and tell our tale more perfectly. Some one shall run and not be faint; some one shall fly with wings where we have walked with weary feet.

F. W. FARRAR, *Sermons and Addresses in America*, p. 202.

Chap. xi., ver. 4.—"By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain."

FAITH as Acting on Worship.

I. All faith implies an effort, a motion of the will towards God. It maintains not existence merely, but living energy; it is not otiose, but active; it even asks, "Lord, what wilt thou have me *to do*?" Think of this as regards worship. To be real it must be a business in which we take an active part—a homage to a Presence which we feel. If there are any to whom the Lord's day, with its special duty, or each day's ordinary duty of prayer and praise, is a mere blank of unoccupied thought, a mere spiritual void, then be sure that the world, the flesh, and the devil, are filling the vacuum. You come away the better or the worse from every service; you are either drawing near to God and receiving of Him, or you are practising unbelief, decomposing your assurance into doubt, and rehearsing the earlier stages of that hardening of the heart of which the Israelites are the standing type, who walked for a whole generation in God's presence, and knew Him not, and perished by the way.

II. Praise is valueless except it express faith. Take the oldest hymn of the distinctively Christian Church, which we have inherited from its earliest ages—the *Te Deum*. That hymn has doubtless been so universally received throughout the West because it appeals so peculiarly to our faith as

Christians. That is the simple account of it; it contains a creed, but under the most personal of aspects. Is it possible to utter such words as those of the *Te Deum* without an emotion of faith and not be self-convicted? Exactly in proportion as it embodies the articles of the faith, and displays each separate *credendum* in near connection with our most deeply seated hopes and our most awful fears, in that proportion does it demand the inward, the subjective faith in us which is the Divine quality in the heart of man. Faith alone can put a life into our worship. H. HAYMAN, *Rugby Sermons*, p. 16.

UNSELFISH IMMORTALITY.

I. It is so that every great man speaks to men. Dead, they live; buried, they rise again; and they speak with more power after death than during life, for jealousy and envy no longer dog their footsteps, and their faults are seen as God sees them, through that veil of charity which justice weaves; and their good is disentangled from their evil, and set in clear light, because so wise and true is the heart of mankind, in spite of all its wrong and folly, that in its memory it is the good and not the evil that survives.

II. Our home and our society are to us what the world is to a great man—the sphere we may fill with work that cannot die. The statesman moulds a people into order and progress, partly by the force of character, partly by great measures. We are the statesmen of our little world. Every day mother and father stamp their character upon their children's lives, mould their manners, conscience, and their future by the measures by which they direct the household. This is our work, and all of it lives after you—lives with tenfold power when you are dead, multiplies in the lives of those who have known you well.

III. Take noble care of the works that are handed down to to you, and the voices that come to you from the silent world. We look too carelessly on that store and its riches. The past spreads a banquet before you; eat and be thankful. The eating will nourish your whole being; the thankfulness will help you to digest the food. And as you do this the sense of the enduring life of human kind will grow on you; you will begin, through long unweaving of yourself with the past, to feel unwoven with an infinite future. This last result will make you worthy yourself to speak when you are dead, to follow your works in men to come. To do this with regard to Christ is to become a Christian.

IV. Considering that universal communion of those who have among men done and thought nobly or beautifully, and how among this communion there is neither nation, nor time, nor place, nor language, but mankind is all, and in all—we, entering into this region through sharing in the works and speech of all those who have been good and great in all lands, become ourselves universal in thought and feeling. We shall arise into the conception of an everlasting life for this vast and glorious race that has so wonderfully thought, and done, and loved, and turn, believing, with outstretched hands and eager eyes, to Him who said, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for all live to Him."

S. A. BROOKE, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvii., p. 401.

REFERENCES: xi. 4.—*Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. ii., p. 588; J. G. Rogers, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxviii., p. 225; W. J. Woods, *Ibid.*, vol. xxxiii., p. 200.

Chap. xi., vers. 4-7.

ABEL, Enoch, Noah.

Before the flood and the Abrahamic covenant God had a people on earth who lived by faith. Abel, the first martyr, Enoch, the seventh from Adam, and Noah, the preacher of righteousness, are the three witnesses of the period whose lives are recorded.

I. Abel, the first man who had to descend into the grave, was carried through it on the arms of redeeming love. Abel, believing the word, approached God through the bitter sacrifice. Every one who believes in Jesus Christ is an accepted worshipper. There is no other true and spiritual worship but the worship of a believer in Jesus, and this worship is *always* accepted. Of this, the only worship, Abel, though dead, yet speaketh.

II. The sinner who through faith in the sacrifice is righteous before God, belongs now to God, and is an heir of eternal life. Sin and death have no more dominion over him. Thus Enoch, the seventh from Adam, walks with God. In this simple familiar expression we have the description of the new life; it brings before us communion with God, dependence on His guidance, submission to His authority, confidence in His love and favour, continuous, habitual fellowship, and a mind conformed to God's mind, and delighting itself in the Lord.

III. Abel testifies of faith's sacrifice and worship always accepted. Enoch of faith's walk and triumph, lifted above sin and death into fellowship with the holy God, the Lord of Life.

Noah's faith has again another testimony. He found grace—the first time the word is used in Scripture—in the eyes of the Lord. His faith, rooted in the contrite heart, and evidenced in his daily work and obedience, was tested by the opposition and mockery of the world to whom he testified of sin, of judgment, and saving grace; declaring what he possessed himself, righteousness by faith. And by his faith he not merely saved himself, but his household.

A. Saphir, *Lectures on Hebrews*, vol. ii., p. 289.

References: xi. 5.—J. Vaughan, *Sermons*, 7th series, p. 176; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. i., p. 112. xi. 5, 6.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxii., No. 1307; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. viii., p. 235. xi. 6.—E. M. Goulburn, *Thoughts on Personal Religion*, p. 41; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. iii., No. 107; J. Kennedy, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 102; H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, vol. xx., p. 317; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. viii., p. 98. xi. 7.—S. Mitchell, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxviii., p. 419; H. Melvill, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 3303.

Chap. xi., ver. 8.—**"And he went out, not knowing whither he went."**

The Father of Missionaries.

He went out, as many had gone out before him, as many would go out after him. He moves onwards and onwards towards the setting sun, till at length all progress is stopped by the sea barrier which parts him from the unknown worlds beyond. There, from those bare mountain heights, he would look down on the purple ocean, with its boundless expanse and its ceaseless turmoil,—the ocean, terrible even to his late descendants. What must have been his thoughts as he remembered that promise, the Divine and irrevocable promise, that his seed should be as the stars of heaven for multitude, and that in him all families of the earth should be blessed? For while all else in the scene was changed, the stars, the sacrament and the promise remained unchangeable, as the promise itself was unchangeable. They shone overhead—each particular star—with its own light, in its own region, above that strange, vague ocean, just as they had shone over his boyhood in his familiar inland home.

I. Whence comes it that, in the ceaseless tide of humanity, rolling westward throughout the ages, this one caravan of a simple nomad Bedouin—this single drop in the mighty stream—has fastened on itself the attention of men? The answer is contained in one word, It was his faith which singled him out in the counsels of God, and has stamped him in the hearts of men. He saw, as in a glass, he read, as in a dark enigma, the

glory of the great Messianic day, when his children should rule over the earth. The shadow of the future was projected on the experience of the present. He saw, and he believed; he went forth, nothing doubting; he went forth, not knowing whither he went.

II. Abraham was not only faithful himself, but he was also the father of the faithful. Look at the history of the Jewish race. What was the secret of its long life, the principle which revived, animated, sustained it, amidst all disasters and under every oppression? Was it not *faith*—faith in a Divine call, in a Divine mission for the race? With all their narrowness and all their weakness—aye, and amidst all their defections, too, this faith never died out. It was the breath of their national life. The spirit of Abraham never altogether left his children. "The vanquished," said Seneca bitterly of the Jews, "have given laws to the victors." What would he have said if he could have looked forward for three centuries, and forecast the time when the spiritual Israel—the offspring of Abraham by faith—should plant its throne on the ruins of the majesty and power of Imperial Rome?

J. B. LIGHTFOOT, *Occasional Sermons*, p. 38.

REFERENCES: xi. 8.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxi., No. 1242; vol. v., No. 261; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xi., p. 365; J. Thain Davidson, *Talks with Young Men*, p. 89; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 145; D. Bushell, *Ibid.*, vol. xxxiv., p. 372. xi. 8-10.—*Homilist*, 1st series, vol. i., p. 119; F. W. Robertson, *Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 77.

Chap. xi., vers. 8-22.

THE Patriarchs.

I. The period of the patriarchs has a very peaceful and lovely character. God appeared and spoke to them. There was as yet no law. What is the real peculiarity of the patriarchal life? What else but faith; that they lived before and with God, waiting for the promise, the heavenly country? They were not worldly; they were other-worldly. God was a very present God to them; while the future, the tabernacle of God on earth with man, was their constant hope.

II. Abraham's faith was the substance of future things hoped for, and a conviction of things not seen. It triumphed over reason; it laughed at impossibilities; it looked beyond death and the long night of the intermediate state; and in all this it gave glory to God; for this is the only glory we can give to God, believing that He can and will do what He has promised.

The fathers, realising the fulfilment of the promise, treated the future possession as if it was theirs already, and disposed of it, as the Spirit directed them, by their last will and blessing.

III. We should learn from Abraham to believe in God that raised up Jesus from the dead. Reason sees your guilt, faith sees your acquittal, for Christ is risen; reason sees your sinfulness and infirmity, faith sees your power and strength in newness of life, for Christ is risen. Live in *tents*; set not your affection on things below. Live in the tents the patriarchal life of prayer, and a reverent, filial walk with God. When the soul is cast down and disquieted within you, when the heart is heavy, when Isaac, in whom you delight, faith's child, is to be sacrificed, then believe, hope in God, and know that you shall yet praise Him. Thus we give glory to God.

A. SAPHIR, *Lectures on Hebrews*, vol. ii., p. 304.

REFERENCES: xi. 9, 10.—C. Kingsley, *Village Sermons*, p. 89. xi. 9, 13.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 533. xi. 10.—H. J. Wilmot Buxton, *Waterside Mission Sermons*, 2nd series, No. 3; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. vi., p. 268. xi. 11.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. xii., p. 345.

Chap. xi., ver. 13.—"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."

FAITH triumphant in Death.

I. The excellence of the faith which places its object beyond death may be seen in two respects. (1) First, as it is in itself greater and bolder, existing in spite of greater difficulties. It is this, because it is fixed on an unknown object; our objects in this life, however remote, are such as we know or can well conceive of; there are no kinds of human pleasure, of such pleasure, at least, as we ourselves are ever likely to desire, which are not in some degree familiar to our minds already. (2) But, further, the faith which stops short of death may be, and often is, a faith which looks to a good object—to the accomplishment of some great work, to the enjoyment of honourable rest; an old age relieved from labour, respected and beloved. Good objects—I would not say otherwise; yet surely not the best nor the highest. But the faith which looks beyond death is content with no less object than God Himself. The faith which is strong enough to look beyond the grave does not fix its view chiefly on any known pleasure to be again revived, upon any known love to be eternally continued, but upon One who

is truly the great end of all being; upon the knowledge of and communion with God and Christ.

II. This faith which takes death within its prospects, and looks on boldly to something beyond, is at once the greatest elevation and the greatest blessing of humanity. It cannot be denied that in quiet times, and amid much worldly enjoyment, such faith is hard to be maintained, and is in many wholly wanting. But yet all the while we are in extreme insecurity, and the sense of this sooner or later must be forced upon us; for sooner or later death and its strangeness must come near to us, and something beyond the grave must be thought of, because the grave itself is close at hand. And if faith has not habitually lived in that region, no longer far off but near, fear will now be dwelling upon it continually. In proportion as any one draws near to God, and thinks of Him, and prays to Him constantly and earnestly, so does he become familiar with the life beyond the grave, and find it possible and natural to fix his faith there.

T. ARNOLD, *Sermons*, vol. v., p. 231.

REFERENCES: xi. 13.—*Church of England Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 1. xi. 13, 14.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxxi., No. 1825; *Ibid.*, *Evening by Evening*, p. 123; R. S. Candlish, *Sermons*, p. 235; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. i., p. 73; A. Maclaren, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 112.

Chap. xi., ver. 14.—**"They that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country."**

THE Expectants.

I. One of the marks of the saints of God is their heavenward look. They are in the world, but not of the world; strangers, not citizens. Their acts, their failures, their sacrifices, their sufferings, are *here*, but their hearts and their treasures are above. But now, can it be that in urging this I have in reality been condemning them? In presuming to admire their upward hopes, have we in truth been branding them with selfishness? There are some who seem to think so. They urge that the dimmer the hope, the nobler the sacrifice; the more bounded the vision, the grander the energy of those who will labour while it is called to-day. Strange, indeed, is the revolution of thought when the dearest of blessings is stigmatised as the most perilous of tempters; and when the chief glory of faith, the sure and certain hope of immortality, is not merely discredited as a dream, but branded as a weakness from which true manhood would be proud to be exempt. Compare, it is said, the sacrifices of the Christian with the sacrifices of him

who has the Christian morality, and the Christian self-denial, without being cheered or encumbered by the Christian's hope. The one devotes himself to the service of humanity, asking for nothing again; the other fixes his eyes on the glories of heaven, and calculates the overplus of future happiness which will more than compensate for present suffering. Which is the nobler? To-day we fix our eyes on the true champions of our faith, on those who have made full proof of their ministry, and have shown the world, by visible proof, what it may be to be a follower of Christ. Would they have been more disinterested, would they have been intrinsically nobler, if they had seen *no* heaven beyond? That upward expression, that unsatisfied air of aspiration, that expectant look as of the servant waiting for his Lord—is it, as great painters have taught us to imagine, the dawn of the eternal day already irradiating the horizon, or is it, rather, the last lingering stain of a refined selfishness, all the more perilous because it is unconscious? No, my brethren; let us never be ashamed of the heavenward heart, as though it detracted from a perfect disinterestedness. Man is born for immortality; that is part of his being, the noblest part, and it cannot be selfish to crave the happiness for which we were created and designed.

H. MONTAGU BUTLER, *Harrow Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 282.

REFERENCES: xi. 15, 16.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xviii., No. 1030. xi. 16.—*Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xix., p. 289; W. M. Taylor, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 113; T. Hammond, *Ibid.*, vol. xxi., p. 54; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 455. xi. 17-19.—C. Kingsley, *Village Sermons*, p. 99.

Chap. xi., ver. 21.—"He worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff."

THE Story of a Pilgrim's Staff.

I. The pilgrim's staff represented something. He leaned on it, not because it was needed, but because it helped him to realise. It was the type of those principles which sustain and make strong—on which the spirit leans. The spirit flees over many fields, but it rests and finds its home on one, like the lark that sweeps up through the blue, and sings in the heavens. Its home is on the earth. You may go up into heaven as much as you like, but you must have a realising place where you may put your head. Man may think in religion about many things, but he is strengthened by one or two things only. Whatever our faiths are, we need to realise; we need to see the thing embodied so that we may apprehend it.

II. And then it will follow from this, secondly, that as it was a staff through which he realised, and therefore was dear to him because it realised and represented to him, so it was a memory. It was a memory of many things, a memory of many events and seasons. I take it, that the staff was very specially a memorial to him of the covenant in the night when God spoke to him in that marvellous dream. He adored God in the memory of it, for it kept him from falling. He did not adore the staff, but in the memory of it he adored God.

III. He worshipped, leaning on his staff, thirdly, because it was experience to him. The staff was not merely itself a memorial; it was inscribed all over with memory. Did not he think of a wrestling hour with the angel, and of days and years which, if few and evil, were surely not unblessed?

IV. It was a staff of promise. To lean on it was an assurance of what God would be and do; to lean on it was to feel the promises rushing through his soul. They pointed the finger to the future in hope and in faith. Faith rises higher and sinks deeper than our mere relative consciousness. Just as the sky is over the earth, so it is with those promises that arch us over, that surround, that illuminate our heaven. All texts are not the same to us; they vary in their lustre; they vary in the nutriment they give. But every text in the word of God says, "Trust me; rest on me; I will be equal to thee."

V. Lastly, he worshipped, leaning on his staff, for it was the staff of redemption—the uninscribed, but still the apprehended redemption. That staff of his—that piece of stick—was to Jacob a representation of a succession of promises, of times when his soul and God's soul had had lonely walks and consultations and communings together. The age of stones has gone, and the age of staffs, perhaps, in the way of which either David or Jacob might speak of their being used; but the age of words is not gone, and we lean on the staff in the counting-house, in the school, in the study, in the street, in the solitude, in the wilderness. As we gaze upon it we are able to say of God's word, "Thou hast not failed me, O thou staff."

E. Paxton Hood, *Penny Pulpit*, new series, No. 766.

Reference: xi. 21.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxiv., No. 1401.

Chap. xi., ver. 22.—"By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones."

I. It is not possible to read the life of Joseph without beholding here the portrait of a great man, not merely as a commanding

and guiding intelligence, but that which is higher yet, a strong and noble personal character. Evidently, all his early life was pressed upon by thoughts his brethren could not comprehend; a contemplative nature, before whom often floated in his boyhood dreams of what he yet was to be.

II. He was what we should call a self-made man; he was as much so as any man can be a self-made man; his life was one long contest with difficulties, but he overcame them all.

III. His greatness was moral greatness. He was not a warrior. He did not bear the sword; he had that perfectly-formed will, which is character; he had insight and foresight; and he had in his possession that which really makes life easy and character strong. He had principles; faith ruled and controlled his character. He saw the golden purpose running through the darker web of his life.

IV. In the commandment he gave concerning his bones we see (1) the nationality of Joseph. His heart turns to Canaan. (2) The lesson of faith. "I die, but God shall surely visit you." Amid the temples of Osiris, Typhon, and Isis, and the world of uncouth marvels and debasement of the Egyptian temples, he had not forgotten Jehovah. (3) A lesson of the sustaining power there is in the memories of good and great men. Joseph lived in the thoughts and affections and hopes of his descendants. The dust of the holy dead is precious; the words of the holy dead are watchwords. (4) We have here a trust, a hope, an aspiration, concerning the resurrection. I cannot but think that this glorious dreamer anticipated, not only the departure of the tribes, but the final unsealing of all those tombs, and longed rather to be near the old cemetery of Machpelah than amidst the cold, dark, stony, stately rooms of Egyptian pyramids and their coffins.

E. Paxton Hood, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxiii., p. 313.

References: xi. 22.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xvi., No. 966; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxvi., p. 68; A. D. Davidson, *Lectures and Sermons*, p. 485. xi. 23.—*Ibid.*, vol. xxiv., No. 1421.

Chap. xi., vers. 23-29.

Moses.

I. Israel is a typical nation. The things which happened to them are recorded for our instruction and comfort. The things which happened unto them, happen unto us also. We also were in Egypt, and had to learn that we could not bring about our deliverance by our own strength and zeal. Like Moses, we had to flee from such attempts of self-wrought emancipation

into the wilderness, and wait there quietly upon the Lord. When we were still, and knew that it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, God showed mercy. We also went through the Red Sea, and then sang the song of praise to God; when we were taught the power of Christ's resurrection, and when the Holy Ghost, separating us by the Cross from Egypt, brought us through resurrection into the new life, and raised our affections to the things above.

II. Israel in Egypt. Look at another aspect of this history. "I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction." The saints who are precious in His sight, whom He purchased with the blood of His own Son, and for whom He has prepared an everlasting inheritance, God's elect, must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. Weak and despised believers are the pillars of the world. The intercession of Moses prevails to avert judgment from a whole people. It is the will of God to do great things for us. All things are ours; all things work together for good to them that love God, who are the called according to His purpose; all things are freely given unto us with Christ, the Son, whom God spared not, but gave up for our everlasting salvation. But it is the will of God that we should learn faith.

A. SAPHIR, *Lectures on Hebrews*, vol. ii., p. 321.

Chap. xi., vers. 24-26.

THE Choice of Moses.

Consider—

I. The choice which Moses made. If we carefully examine this passage we find it to represent one of the most extraordinary acts of deliberate renunciation of the worldly, and deliberate preference for the spiritual, which the world has ever known. It is equally wonderful, whether you look at the things which he sacrificed, or at the things which he preferred. The adopted of royalty, the dweller in a palace, the well-instructed student of Egyptian wisdom, luxury loading her board at his bidding, pleasure waiting for his presence at her revel, within his grasp the sceptre of the most ancient and wealthy monarchy in the globe. It was surely no light thing to renounce a heritage like this; and there must have been, to constrain his decision, motives of irresistible power. He chose "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." He was influenced in his choice by the promise of a Messiah, which God had given unto Israel. There

are, in this choice of Moses, the true principles of the philosophy of Christianity. There is involved the recognition of the future as higher than the present—the preference of the spiritual to the secular, when their respective interests come into collision; and to have a right estimate of both, and to secure an equitable adjustment of their several claims, is the great problem of human life.

II. The motive which influenced his decision is presented in the words, "For he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." The recognition of a future state, with its allotments of delights and doom, is frequently recorded in Scripture as exerting a powerful influence on human conduct. We observe (1) it is certain; (2) it is complete; (3) it is eternal.

W. M. PUNSHON, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 42.

THE Wise Choice.

Our admission into the family of all the saints depends upon the use we may make of that power of choice which, at all times, but especially at some times, is given to every one of us.

I. It is remarkable that this grace of choosing is mentioned as one of the characteristic features of the Lord Jesus Christ. So that when any one makes a good selection in things spiritual, he may have the comfortable feeling that he is copying Christ in one of the greatest traits of His perfect character, and that he is making the best return he can, to God Himself, when he chooses him to be his Father, who, from all eternity, has chosen him to be His child. The exercise of *choosing* is plainly a part, and no little part, of the discipline of life. In creating this world, God seems to have laid it down that it should be a world of probation. All probation presupposes a choice, a power to take good, or to refuse it; to love evil, or to eschew it. Therefore, in a great measure, because it was necessary to the exercise of the faculty of choosing—which God thus made a part of the moral government of this world—He permitted evil to come into it.

II. Moses made his choice as soon as he came to years. We do not know at what age he might be said to come to years. We have no reason to think that it was at that period when he made the first attempt to deliver his countrymen, when he was about forty. There is ground to think that he made the good choice long before that. Probably, it was at that season of life when his reason was capable of making a grave discrimination; and the lesson all lies in the fact that he did it early, as soon as

he could. The sooner you give your heart to God, the younger you are when you make the great decision which is to determine life, the more easy, the more acceptable, probably the happier, and the more Christlike, your choice will be.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 5th series, p. 143.

REFERENCES: xi. 24-26.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xviii., No. 1063; G. Matheson, *Moments on the Mount*, p. 91; J. Sherman, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 185.

Chap. xi., ver. 25.—"Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season."

I. NOTE, in the first place, that the pleasures of sin are short-lived. In the expressive symbolism of Scripture they are like water in a broken cistern, which speedily runs out, or like the blaze of thorns, which crackle and flame up for a little, and then die down into a heap of ashes; and the experience of all who have indulged in them will corroborate this statement. There is in them at best only a temporary thrill, which vibrates for a moment, and needs to be reproduced again and again. They are not joys for ever. They do not live within a man, sounding a ceaseless undertone of happiness in his secret soul, wherever he may be.

II. The pleasures of sin leave a sting behind, and will not bear after-reflection. There is guilt in them, and there never can be happiness in contemplating that. Yet when the brief hour of joy is fled the guilt is the residuum of the joy.

III. The pleasures of sin are such that the oftener they are enjoyed, there is the less enjoyment in them. There is a wonderful harmony between God's moral law and the physical, intellectual, and moral nature of man, for every violation of its precepts does, in the end, evoke the protest of all our powers. Each time such guilty pleasure is felt, a portion of the sensitiveness is destroyed, and it takes more to produce the same excitement again, until at last it is impossible to produce it by any means whatever. But with the joys of holiness it is quite different. The oftener we enjoy them they are the higher. The longer and the better a man knows Christ the more happiness does he derive from Him.

IV. The pleasures of sin are most expensive. "The wicked do not live out half their days." The sinner is old before his time. Far otherwise is the experience of the Christian. So far from wasting his energies, his faith economises them, and haloes them all with the joy of his own happiness.

W. M. TAYLOR, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 145.

Chap. xi., ver. 26.—"They desire a better country, that is, an heavenly."

THE Better Country.

I. Look, in the first place, to the state of soul here specified, "They desire." That word denotes an ardent longing for the possession of something which we have not now, but which we may come ultimately to call our own; and when used, as here, to designate the attitude of a believing soul toward heaven, it is to be noted that it is a positive thing. (1) It is not, therefore, to be mistaken for the dislike of the evils of the present life which is frequently mistaken for it. (2) Similarly, we must not suppose that we can use the term to designate that submission to the inevitable which makes a man say that if he must leave the world, though he would greatly prefer to stay in it, he would rather go to heaven than hell. The desire in such a case, very clearly, is to abide in the flesh; and if one has no more powerful attraction to heaven than that it is not hell, he is a long way from being made meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light. (3) Even true Christian resignation is not desire. Desire is an attraction to heaven for its own sake; an eager yearning to be with Christ and those who love Him perfectly, and serve Him constantly on high.

II. Note the object towards which this state of heart is directed, "The better land, that is, the heavenly." The evil things of earth shall there be absent, and the things which the Christian most delights in shall be possessed, not only in an infinitely richer measure, but eternally; therefore to those who value this life for Christ's sake, heaven must be, cannot but be, an object of desire.

III. Note the influence of this desire on those who cherish it. "They confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on earth." Now that confession has a threefold influence. (1) It keeps those who make it from regarding the things of this life as supreme. (2) It sustains the Christian under present afflictions. (3) It gives consolation in bereavement and joy in death.

W. M. TAYLOR, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 113.

REFERENCES: xi. 26.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 210; Archbishop Benson, *Boy Life*, p. 368; G. Matheson, *Moments on the Mount*, p. 93.

Chap. xi., ver. 27.—"By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible."

ENDURING as Seeing the Invisible One.

I. What is this virtual seeing of Him who is invisible?

There must be wrought in me, between Him and me, some sympathy, some good understanding and fellow feeling about the matter spoken of. There must be established between Him and me some personal relation of mutual confidence and unity. There must, in a word, be formed a certain close unity of faith working by love. Then will that *quasi* vision "*as seeing*" be realised; that vivid sense and keen grasp of "my Lord and my God," as personally present to my eager gaze, my touch, my embrace, which compensates, and far more than compensates, for my never having set on Him my bodily eyes.

II. The joy of the Lord is your strength. Not only at the Communion Table do you rest, but in the field of toil or of battle you endure, as seeing Him who is invisible. So Christ Himself, the man Christ Jesus, endured. The secret of His endurance was that with the eye of faith He always saw the Father. The Holy Ghost strengthens us to endure as seeing the unseen Saviour, even as He strengthened Him to endure as seeing the unseen Father. It is in the felt and realised presence of a Divine person, unseen in one sense, but in another virtually and vividly seen, that your strength to endure lies. And He is to be seen by you, not merely as an object of contemplation in a leisure hour, but as in the time of danger, standing beside you, conversing with you, calling you by name, and bidding you be strong and of a good courage.

R. S. CANDLISH, *Sermons*, p. 125.

REFERENCES: xi. 27.—A. Raleigh, *The Way to the City*, p. 293; E. P. Hood, *Sermons*, p. 67; J. H. Evans, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 5; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 331; *Ibid.*, vol. xix., pp. 100, 225; *Ibid.*, vol. xxxi., p. 161; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 21. xi. 30.—*Homilist*, vol. i., p. 95; J. Vaughan, *Sermons*, 14th series, p. 93.

Chap. xi., vers. 30-40.

WE may make use of extraordinary examples to encourage our ordinary faith at ordinary times. These models are on a very grand and large scale, and so we can plainly see them.

I. Faith works and suffers; faith is busy and energetic. It is our only strength and victory. In suffering we glorify God as well as in action; and in suffering it is only faith which grasps the promises, and rests on the bosom of God in quiet and loving humility. Suffering is an honour God puts on His saints. To them it is *given* to suffer for Christ's sake. A life without affliction and self-denial, a life without the cross, is not

likely to precede the life with the crown. Let tried believers not doubt that they are precious in God's sight.

II. The first and most obvious difference between the old saints of the Church is, that the promised salvation was to them *entirely* in the future; while we have lived to see the first advent, we also are looking forward to the fulfilment of God's promises at the second coming. But to Israel the Messianic advent, with its salvation and glory, was altogether in the future. The reasons why the gift of the Spirit is now bestowed are manifold and obvious. (1) The Spirit's advent is connected with the finished work of redemption. Because the blood has been shed, the Spirit descends. (2) The Spirit comes through the preaching of faith, and not by the law. It is when the forgiveness of sin is declared that God puts His Spirit within our hearts. (3) The Spirit, as an indwelling Spirit, descends from the incarnate, crucified, and glorified Son of God,—the Christ or anointed Head of the Church. At the coming of the Lord the union of all believers will be manifested. This union will be to the glory of God, a part of the blessedness of His people.

A. SAPHIR, *Lectures on Hebrews*, vol. ii., p. 337.

REFERENCES: xi. 31.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. iii., No. 119; vol. xviii., No. 1061. xi. 32-34.—W. Stevenson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 292; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. vii., p. 278. xi. 33.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. viii., No. 435. xi. 34.—*Ibid.*, vol. xii., No. 697; A. P. Stanley, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 301; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. v., p. 9; Archbishop Benson, *Boy Life*, p. 46.

Chap. **xi.**, ver. 35.—"Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection."

CONSIDER—

1. The better resurrection. Think (1) of the place of it. "There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie." The body which here depresses the soul shall be framed to lift it up, to give it perception and vigour, insight and wing, and made like unto Christ's glorious body. (2) Think of the company in the place. In this world our dearest friends become at times more dear to us. Some glow in them, or in us, suffuses the soul, and we feel that they are more ours, and we can be more theirs; times when we see deeper into each other's nature, and melt into one spirit; those times, above all, when we know that we are touching one another in the thought and life of God. Now, in that heavenly world we shall have the best at their

best. (3) Think of the essence of this eternal life. Its essence consists in its entire freedom from sin. (4) Think of the security of that state. The children of the heavenly resurrection die no more; death hath no more dominion over them. The shadow is all behind, the light before, and the light shall no more go down.

II. Consider next the higher faith required for this resurrection. It needed very great confidence in the living God to believe that He could reanimate the dead frame which the soul had quitted for a few hours or days; but to face entire decay and mouldering dust, and to believe that those who sleep in it shall yet awake and sing, this requires a frame of soul still nobler. Let us mention some of its features, that we may aim at them. (1) It needs more of what I may call the patience of faith. The faith of the sisters of Bethany demanded one great effort, and the battle was gained. But ours cannot be so compressed. We have to bury our dead out of our sight, to wait the weary days and years, and "feel God's heaven so distant." And yet, you see, there are those who endured it all, of whom the voice from heaven has said, "Here is the patience and faith of the saints." (2) It needs also more of what we may call the sanctified imagination of faith. The circle of these earthly resurrections was very narrow and very simple compared with that which we expect. Their faith had only to bring back the dead to their old accustomed house, the well-known seat, the familiar haunts. Ours has to find out a footing for itself from the void and formless infinite, where the scenes and inhabitants and states of mind are so different that our friends seem to have passed away beyond our knowledge. There is an imagination of faith which helps to the evidence of things not seen. (3) This better resurrection needs more of the spiritual insight of faith.

III. Note some of the ways in which we may strengthen ourselves in this higher faith. (1) The first thought is addressed to your reason. We read here of men who were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Can you imagine that their self-devotion was founded on delusion, and that God has made His world so that the noblest and divinest deeds in its history have a perpetual falsehood at their hearts? (2) "*Women* . . . received *their* dead." God intended that our deepest heart affections should be the helpers of our highest hopes and the instinctive guarantees of a life to come. (3) There is no

certainty about immortality save what grows from union with the dying and living and risen Son of God.

J. KER, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 336.

REFERENCE: xi. 36.—F. W. Aveling, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 84.

Chap. xi., ver. 37.—"They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword."

MARTYRDOM.

The word "martyr" properly means "a witness," but it is used to denote exclusively one who has suffered *death* for the Christian faith. Let us consider what it was in the early Christian ages to be a martyr.

I. First, it was to be a *voluntary* sufferer. Men, perhaps, suffer in various diseases more than the martyrs did, but they cannot help themselves. The martyrs lived under a continual trial, a daily exercise of faith, which we, living in peaceable times, can scarcely understand. To be a martyr is to feel the storm coming, and willingly to endure it at the call of duty, for Christ's sake and for the good of the brethren; and this is a kind of firmness which we have no means of displaying at the present day, though our deficiency in it is evidenced as often as we yield to inferior or ordinary temptations.

II. The suffering itself of martyrdom was in some respects peculiar. It was a death, cruel in itself, publicly inflicted, and heightened by the fierce exultation of a malevolent populace. The unseen God alone was their comforter, and this invests the scene of their suffering with supernatural majesty, and awes us when we think of them. A martyrdom is a season of God's especial power in the eye of faith, as great as if a miracle were visibly wrought. It is a fellowship of Christ's sufferings, a commemoration of His death, a representation filling up in figure "that which is behind of His afflictions, for His body's sake, which is the Church." And thus, being an august solemnity in itself, and a kind of sacrament, a baptism of blood, it worthily finishes that long searching trial which was its usual forerunner in primitive times.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 41

REFERENCE: xi. 37.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxvi., No. 1528.

Chap. xi., ver. 38.—"Of whom the world was not worthy."

GREAT MEN.

I. It behoves us to have a care how we judge the men of our own day who take a leading part in the conduct of affairs, and

compel the notice of their fellows. It is easy enough to load them with flatteries if they be on our side; but should they be teachers of new things, with new ways and new ideas and new modes of speech, which some denounce and others mock at, then it behoves us to be cautious and patient. Great things are not so well seen when you are close to them. You may stand beneath the façade of St. Peter's at Rome, and form but a feeble conception of its magnitude; and even when you remove to some little distance, it is obscured by the crowd of vulgar buildings which surround it. But when you have journeyed twenty miles away across the level campagna, and then turn and look for Rome, it is St. Peter's which you see, as though it hung from heaven, suspended in the lucid air, and the crowding, encircling meanness has disappeared. And so it is with great men. We need to be at a distance rightly to estimate their magnitude.

II. Of some of the men in this list you would scarcely say that they were moral or religious men. But they were all alike said to have been faithful men; that is, men full of faith. And herein we may notice that the possession of faith is the prime capability for a religious life, as it is also the first qualification for the successful conduct of any great undertaking. By faith I mean the firm grip of some conviction, some purpose or other, so that there is decision and earnestness, and a marked out line in life. The man who takes up a cause and holds by it, and fights for it, even if the cause be a mistaken one; the man who is loyal and true to a person, and stands by him and speaks out for him, such a man, however worldly he may be, however selfish or however immoral, may by God's grace be converted to genuine piety. W. PAGE ROBERTS, *Reasonable Service*, p. 117.

REFERENCES: xi. 38.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xv., p. 406; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 303; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 217. xi. 39, 40.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. vii., p. 145; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. vi., p. 94; R. Duckworth, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxx., p. 273; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vi., p. 289. xi. 40.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xii., p. 114.

Chap. xii., ver. 1.—"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."

THE Visible Church an Encouragement to Faith.

I. Certainly it cannot be denied, that if we surrender our hearts to Christ and obey God, we shall be in the number of the few. So it has been in every age; so it will be to the end

of time. It is hard, indeed, to find a man who gives himself up honestly to his Saviour. Nay, it would seem that as Christianity spreads, its fruit becomes less, or at least does not increase with its growth. It seems as if a certain portion of truth were in the world, a certain number of the elect in the Church, and as you increased its territory, you scattered the remnant to and fro, and made them seem fewer, and made them feel more desolate. Even when they know each other they may not form an exclusive communion together. There is no Invisible Church yet formed; it is but a name as yet, a name given to those who are hidden and known to God only, and as yet but half formed, the unripe and gradually ripening fruit which grows on the stem of the Church Invisible. As well might we attempt to foretell the blossoms which will at length turn to account and ripen for the gathering, and then, counting up all these, and joining them together in our minds, call them by the name of a tree, as attempt now to associate in one the true elect of God. They are scattered about amid the leaves of the mystical vine which is seen, and receive their nurture from its trunk and branches.

II. Do what he will, Satan cannot quench or darken the light of the Church. He may encrust it with his own evil creations, but even opaque bodies transmit rays, and Truth shines with its own heavenly lustre, though under a bushel. The scattered witnesses become, in the language of the text, "a cloud," like the Milky Way in the heavens. We have, in Scripture, the records of those who lived and died by faith in the old time, and nothing can deprive us of them. We find that we are not solitary; that others before us have been in our very condition, have had our feelings, undergone our trials, and laboured for the prize which we are seeking. This is why it is a Christian's characteristic to look back upon former times. The man of this world lives in the present, or speculates about the future; but faith rests upon the past, and is content. It makes the past the mirror of the future. What a world of sympathy and comfort is thus opened to us in the communion of saints. The heathen, who sought truth most earnestly, fainted for want of companions; every one stood by himself. But Christ has "gathered together the children of God that were scattered abroad," and brought them near to each other in every time and place. One living saint, though there be but one, is a pledge of the whole Church Invisible.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 236.

Weights and Sins.

I. There are hindrances which are not sins. A "weight" is that which, allowable in itself—legitimate, perhaps a blessing, the exercise of a power which God has given us—is, for some reason, a hindrance and impediment in *our* running the heavenly race. The one word describes the action or habit in its inmost essence; the other describes it by its accidental consequences. Sin is sin, in whatever degree it is done; but weights may be weights when they are in excess, and helps, not hindrances, when they are in moderation. The one is a legitimate thing, turned to a false use; the other is always, and everywhere, and by whomsoever performed, a transgression of God's law. The renunciation that is spoken of is not so much the putting away from ourselves of certain things lying round about us, that may become temptations, as the putting away of the dispositions within us which make these things temptations.

II. If we would run we must lay weights aside. The whole of the Christian's course is a fight. Because of that conflict, it follows, that if ever there is to be a positive progress in the Christian race, it must be accompanied and made possible by the negative process of casting away and losing much that interferes with it. There are two ways in which the injunction of the text may be obeyed. (1) The one is, by getting so strong that the thing shall not be a weight, though we carry it; (2) the other is, to take the prudent course of putting it entirely aside.

III. The laying aside of every weight is only possible by looking to Christ. We empty our hearts; but the empty heart is dull and cold and dark; we empty our hearts that Christ may fill them. Just as the old leaves drop naturally from the tree when the new buds of spring begin to put themselves out, so the new affections come and dwell in the heart, and expel the old.

A. Maclaren, *Sermons in Manchester*, vol. i., p. 259.

The Cloud of Witnesses.

I. Christian life is here compared to a race. The fitness of this comparison will appear in the following facts: (1) Christian life is not the ordinary human life. (2) In living out the Christian life exertions and endeavours are necessary. (3) For entrance upon Christian life a great change is needful. (4) The consummation of the Christian's life is singular. There is a racer's crown for the Christian.

II. These are the truths which justify the figure; but they are not the truths specially presented in the text: these are (1)

that Christian life is not, as a life of faith, new; it has its witnesses from all past time. (2) The Christian life is not solitary; its witnesses are a cloud. (3) Christian life is not easy; it has its hardships and difficulties. (4) Christian life is continuous; it has its starting-point and its goal. (5) Christian life is not unaided; it has its subordinate aids and helps, besides the helper God.

S. MARTIN, *Comfort in Trouble*, p. 151.

OUR Life a Race.

Life is of necessity a race, and we are commanded to make it a Christian race; such a race as Christianity will approve, and the Author of Christianity will reward with an imperishable crown. I notice—

I. That in order to this it must be run with a view to a proper object. (1) In judging of what ought to be the great aim and ambition of our life, it will be admitted, as an axiomatic truth, that it ought to be the *very highest* aim of which we are capable. (2) One consequence of this is, that anything which addresses itself only to a *part* of our being cannot be the proper aim of our life; we must take in the whole. Christianity proposes a prize which is worthy of all our efforts, which may well stand at the end of our life-race, and inflame the runners with a holy and boundless ambition.

II. The second thing necessary to make our life a Christian race is that we run in the right path. In every race there is a course marked out. It is not left to the runner to prescribe for himself in this matter. He must keep to the course, or he forfeits the very possibility of gaining the prize. There are two marks by which we may know the Christian's way. (1) The first is faith; (2) the second is loving obedience.

III. The third thing necessary to make our life-race a Christian race, is that we run in a right manner and spirit. The Apostle tells us that we must *so* run as to obtain; everything as regards comfort, progress and success will depend on the manner and spirit in which we run. (1) We must strip ourselves of every unnecessary encumbrance. (2) We must have concentration of purpose. (3) We must run in a spirit of dependence on our God. Note one or two remarks by way of encouragement. (1) It is surely a great encouragement that Divine help is promised. (2) It is a great encouragement that we are running in the view of so many onlookers, all concerned for our progress, and deeply interested in our success. This was one of the grand animating circumstances in the

national contests of ancient times. The runner was conscious that the eyes of his assembled countrymen were upon him. The nation was present to behold. The consciousness of this could not fail to be the inspiration of all; it widened the glory of victory and deepened the shame of defeat. Is it not the same in the Christian race? The witnesses here are all the best and greatest in the universe. (3) The unspeakable value of the prize is another encouragement which we cannot overlook. Well might the Apostle say, "I reckon that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us."

A. L. SIMPSON, *The Upward Path*, p. 81.

THE Christian Race.

I. The writer has been taking his readers through the splendid battle roll of the heroes of faith. His object in doing so had been twofold: he wished to show them that in becoming Christians they had introduced no discontinuity into their religious life; had nowise forfeited their religious inheritance in the grand historic past of which, as patriots, they had a right to be so proud. But far more he desired to show, that not a few souls in this sad and wicked world had been pure and good; that there had been some, even in Sardis, who had not defiled their robes; that the views of those who would fain persuade us that apparent saintship is nothing but perfected hypocrisy are not merely cynical, but false. It is of memorable importance for us to know that the task set before us is not beyond the powers of any one of us; that any attempt to regard it as beyond our powers is a device of the justice and love of God. God has set a goal before us; He has bidden us run a race, and that race we can run, and that goal we can attain, not by our own strength, but by the strength which God gives us.

II. In order to run the race we must lay aside every weight. The word rendered "weight" is a technical, an athletic, a gymnastic word; it means, strictly speaking, superfluous flesh. We must strip off every encumbrance; yes, and the sin which doth so easily beset us. Here you have the very heart of the matter. You must retain nothing that impedes the race of God; you must make no truce with Canaan, you must plead for no Zoar of your own; you must leave the guilty city, and cast upon it no backward glance. If there be one point in which you are specially weak against the assaults of Satan; if you know that there is one sin to whose assaults you are specially prone, it is

that sin which, as Dante said, will destroy your soul; that conquered, all others follow it; that victorious, all others partake of its victory.

F. W. FARRAR, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxii., p. 289.

REFERENCES: xii. 1.—G. Salmon, *Sermons in Trinity College, Dublin*, p. 1; Bishop Temple, *Rugby Sermons*, 1st series, p. 55; S. Martin, *Comfort in Trouble*, p. 151; *Expositor*, 1st series, vol. v., p. 149; R. L. Browne, *Sussex Sermons*, p. 227; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. iv., p. 198; *Ibid.*, 4th series, vol. i., p. 96; T. De Witt Talmage, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 70; J. B Brown, *Ibid.*, vol. vii., pp. 369, 392; H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, vol. viii., p. 501; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. v., p. 124; vol. x., p. 299; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. viii., p. 57; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. viii., p. 88.

Chap. xii., vers. 1, 2.

THE Exemplar of Faith.

I. The cloud of witnesses is not the object on which our heart is fixed. They testify of faith, and we cherish their memory with gratitude, and walk with a firmer step because of the music of their lives. Our eye, however, is fixed, not on them, not on many, but on One; not on the army, but the Leader; not on the servants, but the Lord. We see Jesus only, and from Him we derive our true strength, even as He is our light of life. There are many witnesses, and yet Jesus is the only true and faithful Witness. His example is the great motive of our obedience of faith. Jesus walked by faith. He, who in the eternal counsel undertook our salvation in obedience to the Father's will, entered, by His Incarnation, on the path of faith. Herein is the very power and efficacy of the obedience of Jesus; that it is the voluntary condescension and obedience of the *Son* of *God*; that it is a true and real obedience, submission, dependence, struggle, suffering; that it is the obedience of faith.

II. Jesus believed. He is the Author and Finisher of faith—the only perfect, all-sided embodiment of faith. Since without faith it is impossible to please God, and since Jesus always and perfectly pleased the Father; since faith is the very root and spirit of obedience, and Jesus was the servant of the Lord, who finished the God-given work, Jesus was perfect in *faith*. The whole realm of faith was traversed by Him; He ascended the whole scale, from the lowest to the highest step; He endured and He conquered all things.

III. The Christian life is a race, and hence constancy, steadfastness, perseverance, are absolutely necessary. "Lay aside useless and hurtful things; leave them behind," says the Apostle. It is easy, when we look unto Jesus; but impossible unless our

thoughts and affections are centred on Christ, unless we behold Him as our Lord and Bridegroom, our Strength and Joy. This is the only method of the New Covenant.

A. SAPHIR, *Lectures on Hebrews*, vol. ii., p. 352.

THE Communion of Saints.

The Christian Church has for many generations set apart a day for the observance of the Feast of All Saints; and its eve, celebrated in poetry, in games, by wild and graceful superstitions, and bearing in its practices traces of heathen faiths and legend, has been called All Hallows' Eve. The Feast was originally set up to put an end to the excessive multiplication of Saints' Days. These grew so rapidly, each nation wishing to honour its own special saints, that more than half the days in each month were turned into holidays. Work was neglected, and laziness seemed in danger of developing into a virtue. The Roman Church then threw the veneration and love of all these holy persons into one festival, instead of many, and the day was called the Feast of All Saints. The festival finally became the poetic form in which the doctrine of the communion of saints was enshrined.

I. This faith tells us that we are never alone. The very ground of it is that in the midst of this vast world of being, supporting its existence and pervading it, touching it at all points, and conscious of the life of every soul in it, is God, our Father, at once the vital principle by which each several being—to borrow an illustration from science—spins on its individual poles, and the ether in which independently it moves. He knows every thought; He feels every sorrow and joy; He supports with all the force of law every effort towards goodness, that is, towards union with the eternal, with the universe; He makes us feel, when we are in evil thought or act, our contradiction to the whole universe, our apartness from Him, till at last we yield ourselves to goodness only, and are consciously at one with Him.

II. And, secondly, it is not only God who, according to this idea, is present with us for solace and for power, but also all the noble dead—all who live in God, and through the unity of His pervading Spirit are interwoven with us in the infinite web of immortal communion. Jesus is the Lover of our soul, and so are all the holy and loving souls who live in the eternal world. He is the nearest and the most conquering in His love and in His communion. But yet there are some whom we have known and loved on earth who have to us a relationship of union, not so powerful in love, but nearer in human

bonds. These are ours, and the tie between us, though they are not seen, is closer even than it was on earth. What is its ground? Where is its strength rooted? In the truth of the Communion of Saints.

III. Finally, there are two things more to say. One is, that all the joy and comfort of this doctrine depend on our becoming pure in heart, holy in word and deed. Communion with God is known through holiness. The pure in heart see God. Communion with humanity in God is known by love. And there is no other way in the world by which we can believe in God and believe in man. And, secondly, when we think of this vast assemblage, all united in a communion of gentleness, we understand that the last and highest range of human nature is not knowledge or power, but holiness held in love.

S. A. BROOKE, *The Unity of God and Man*, p. 61.

THE Christian Race.

I. The Race. It is the old race from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City, from ruin to regeneracy, from sin to full salvation. Sometimes it is called a journey. Even that is a figure full of interest, as denoting a purpose, a progress, an end. But here it rises to its full strength, to its full dignity, and is called a race. A race, if it is at all worthy of the name, is a straining from beginning to end. Let no man think that the Christian life is easy. When things get so low with any one that the strenuous imagery of this passage seems to have no application, that man has no evidence, or he can have very little, and that most precarious, that he is a runner at all.

II. The runners—who are they? Two things are found in all the runners who run and strive lawfully for this great mastery, for this great prize. And they are (1) that all the runners shall begin at the Christian beginning, where all workers, all warriors, all runners, do begin, who enter upon this earnest and grand life. And where is that? They must begin with repentance; they must begin with faith; they must begin, in one word, with the Lord Jesus Christ. (2) Then the other thing is this, that, while beginning thus at the true beginning, they must also seek nothing less than the true end—the high, Christian end. And what is that? The last and noblest end of all Christian life, is the image of Christ, purity, perfection, the full perfection of our nature, conformity in all things to the Master's will; that is the end, perfect peace, perfect knowledge, perfect love, perfect obedience.

III. The Impediments. These exist in every case; no runner is without them. They are to be laid aside. All that hinders, weights or sins, whatever they may be, be they constitutional, or be they superinduced, if they hinder they are to be laid aside by us.

IV. The Witnesses. There are spectators of the race. There is a watching from the skies: there is an earnest waiting of the glorified Church. What we think of as most shadowy, is in fact most real. What we think of as most distant, is sometimes really most near. What a motive is thus derived to promote our diligence while we are here as runners, and ere we have yet won our crown! If we lose it, it will be in sight of them all. Those whom you have never seen will see you; will see you stumble, will see you fall, will see you cease from running any more, while another takes your crown.

V. The Goal. The goal is at the end of the race. The goal in this case is the person of Christ, "looking unto Jesus." This is the goal, the presence, the approbation of Christ. His presence satisfies that illustrious company. It is His light that covers them all with glory; it is His approbation that thrills them all with joy; it will be at His feet that they will cast their crowns at the last day.

A. Raleigh, *Penny Pulpit*, 3938.

References: xii. 1, 2.—E. L. Hull, *Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 144; Fletcher, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 133; E. B. Pusey, *Parochial Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 130; Bishop M. Simpson, *Sermons*, p. 405.

Chap. xii., ver. 2.—"Looking unto Jesus."

I. If man is to become good, it is, above all, needful that he should learn to hate evil; and to hate it, not alone because of its uselessness or inexpediency, but because of its inherent badness. Now here a look at the Cross of Jesus supplies the need. To those who will only open their eyes to see, in the sufferings and death of the holy Jesus, the terrible result of man's sin, looking to the cross supplies a motive for loathing and forsaking sin, such as whole volumes of moral teaching could never produce. "Looking unto Jesus" supplies man with that most irresistible of all motive impulses, the motive impulse of love.

II. And this brings me to a farther influence resulting from this upward look. I mean, that process of assimilation which is brought about by intensely beholding those whom we intensely love.

III. But if thus, from feelings of gratitude, and by a process of

assimilation we become like Jesus, and love to obey His example, what must follow? Why, necessarily this: we shall be ready, like Him, to deny ourselves for the sake of our fellow-men. In other words, that vital element of goodness—self-sacrifice for the sake of our fellow-men—will become daily more and more the principle of our life work.

IV. Looking to Jesus has the power to make us persevere in well-doing. He, unto whom we are looking, knew all things. He was able to reconcile discrepancies, and to solve mysteries which baffle our finite minds. The perpetuation of these difficulties may be, for the present, a part of our probation. It matters not, enough for us to have before us the example of One who, knowing the meaning of what to us is inscrutable, showed us how a Christian ought to work by working even to the death Himself.

BISHOP OF MEATH, *Oxford and Cambridge Journal*, June 2nd, 1881.

Chap. xii., ver. 2.—"**Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith.**"

SELF-Contemplation.

Instead of looking off to Jesus, and thinking little of ourselves, it is at present thought necessary, among the mixed multitude of religionists, to examine the heart with the view of ascertaining whether it is in a spiritual state or no.

I. This modern system certainly does disparage the revealed doctrines of the Gospel, however its more moderate advocates may shrink from admitting it. Considering a certain state of heart to be the main thing to be aimed at, they avowedly make the "truth as it is in Jesus," the definite creed of the Church, secondary in their teaching and profession. This system tends to obliterate the great objects brought to light in the Gospel, and to darken the eye of faith.

II. On the other hand, the necessity of obedience in order to salvation does not suffer less from the upholders of this modern system than the articles of the creed. Instead of viewing works as the concomitant development and evidence, as well as the subsequent result of faith, they lay all the stress upon the direct creation in their minds of faith and spiritual-mindedness, which they consider to consist in certain emotions and desires, because they can form abstractedly no better or truer notion of these qualities.

III. Is it too much to say that, instead of attempting to harmonise Scripture with Scripture, much less referring to

antiquity to enable them to do so, they either drop altogether or explain away whole portions of the Bible—and those most sacred ones? Is not the rich and varied revelation of our merciful Lord practically reduced to a few chapters of St. Paul's Epistles, whether rightly or perversely understood?

IV. The immediate tendency of these opinions is to undervalue ordinances as well as doctrines.

V. The foregoing remarks go to show the utterly unevangelical character of the system in question. Considered as the characteristic of a school, the principles in question are anti-Christian; for they destroy all positive doctrine, all ordinances, all good works; they foster pride, invite hypocrisy, discourage the weak, and deceive most fatally, while they profess to be the special antidotes to self-deception.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 163.

JESUS the Author and Finisher of our Faith.

I. Author of our faith. Faith begins often in deep, impenetrable secrecy, not within the sphere of personal observation. The soul does not observe its own faith at first, for a while; it is hardly within the sphere of personal consciousness, except fitfully. So it begins, and, like every living thing—I mean, of course, in the beginning, it is delicate, tender, frail, easily hurt and wounded, and, commonly speaking, easily destroyed. Remember that Jesus Christ is the Author of your faith, little though it seems. We should try to judge of things in ourselves and others, not as they seem, but as they are. Faith is faith, and Christ its Author, whatever accidents, hindrances, human imperfections, rolling wheels, dusty whirlwinds, and biting east winds may be about it; and faith has a power of living on, of rising up, of resisting attack, of making a channel for its own life, clarifying as it flows, the power given to it by its Author the very power of His own faith and His own life, by which He, for Himself and for us, overcame the whole world, and at last ascended up to heaven. A wonderful consummation, a wonderful encouragement, that lets in the simple truth that Christ is the Author of our faith.

II. Now, observe, Christ is also the Finisher of our faith. As soon as it is begun, His whole discipline is with a view to its perfecting. There is, of course, a sense in which our faith and religious life never can be ended; it will remain with us and in us for evermore. We shall have it in heaven, of course, if we believe the word of God, and have it on the earth, and we

shall trust in the providence of heaven—for heaven will have a providence—just as we trust in the providence of God on the earth. And we shall obey His commands without the misgivings and imperfections of service that attach to our obedience below. But this earthly time is in many ways a time by itself. We sometimes have occasion to say, because it is true, looking upon life as a continued moral progress, that death is but a circumstance, and that it marks a particular stage in the grand evolution of things. That is true, but it is equally true that death is a grand crisis. The life process is then so far complete. One epoch of it has been finished: the probationary epoch. The growing of earth is all done. There are endless diversities in the spiritual experience of believers in coming along their ten thousand divers roads to the one grand meeting-place in perfect holiness in heaven. There are many emblems used in Scripture to describe the work of progressive sanctification, and we have to remember that the Finisher is working His one great work by means of all the various methods, and that it will be the worse for us if we insist upon putting the whole of the meaning into any one. The one thing we have to remember is this, that the Finisher is at work in all, if not in the actual finishing work itself, yet in the preparatory work, which is just as important.

A. RALEIGH, *Penny Pulpit*, New Series, No. 327.

Chap. xii., ver. 2.—"Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross," etc.

CHRISTIAN JOY.

I. What was the cause of the Saviour's joy? (1) It was the joy of redemption. (2) It was the joy of union. It was the sense that He would be united with you and me; that was the joy of Jesus Christ. (3) It was joy supremely for the glory of God; that was His joy. It was the passion of His life; it bore Him through the desolation of His death.

II. What is the power of joy? (1) It is the power of exaltation. (2) It is a principle of expansion. Joy is an expansive power—the joy of God. Just because it is "of God," because it is a part out of that great broad life of our Creator, it expands the heart of the creature. What is one of the sorrows and degradations of life? Why, that we are so narrow-minded that we take narrow views of the great questions of human life. Was there ever a heart so big as the great heart of Jesus? That heart opened out to, and embraced the whole family of,

poor, weak mankind. (3) It is a principle of strength. It prevents us from falling down into the mire and clay, into the darkness and sadness of sorrow. Joy raises us above the world, for it opens out what some men would call an imaginary, but what I dare to call a real, though spiritual, world.

III. Why may we have joy? Because we are immortal. If we were mortal, then, indeed, there would be sorrow. What we want is a deepening sense of immortality. The sense of life is blessedness. (1) I joy because my Christian life implies also a completeness of final union—final union with all that is holy, and beautiful, and good. (2) There is further reason for our joy—a reason not despicable in a life of labour—we joy because "there remaineth a rest for the people of God." (3) It is a life of joy because of the abundance of grace. He came that grace might be abundant; and so it is, and the duty of Christians is the duty of cheerfulness and thanksgiving.

J. W. KNOX LITTLE, *Characteristics and Motives of the Christian Life*, p. 118.

Chap. xii., ver. 2.—**"Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."**

LET us notice—

I. What Christ endured.

II. Why He endured it.

III. The lessons that endurance teaches.

I. The sorrows of Jesus. What Christ endured—crucifixion. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Jesus laid down His life for His foes! Christ had endured much for mankind before He suffered on the Holy Rood. But His other pains and sorrows fade away before the agonies of His crucifixion, even as the stars turn pale and then vanish before the overpowering light of the sun. He endured for the joy of saving souls; endured, not with the dogged callousness of the Stoic who despises his fellow-creatures, but by reason of a love that triumphed over every feeling of pain, of shame, and of sorrow. For the joy that was set before Him He endured all this.

II. Why Christ suffered; why Christ endured it. It was for the joy that was set before Him, and that joy consisted in doing good to others. It was because by this suffering Jesus redeemed mankind. It was to save men from the punishment

and the power of sin. Like all true heroes, Jesus was pre-eminently unselfish. He had nothing to gain save the love of humanity. His joy was purely unselfish. He suffered, not to gain wealth, or renown, or power, but simply and solely to redeem mankind, to carry out to the last that obedience to the Father by which the many are made righteous. He suffered because He was obedient to the voice of conscience. There was nothing of the ascetic in Jesus. An ascetic voluntarily, purposely, goes out of the way to make himself miserable. Not so Jesus. He was pre-eminently the Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. But all His sorrows met Him in the path of duty. He heroically endured the shame and ignominy of the Crucifixion (a more degrading death than hanging with us), despising its shame, for the joy that was set before Him—the joy of redeeming the world.

III. The lessons of endurance. It teaches professing Christians to be ready to endure the cross of self-denial, and despise the shame that the world heaps on the faithful disciple of the Lord. It appeals to every sinner, with matchless eloquence, to be a follower of the self-denying Jesus. Plato and Socrates were noble leaders for Athens in the paths of virtue, but Athens perished. She could not be saved by her one or two great men, for the mass of the people were utterly corrupt. So, too, the greatness of our fatherland depends not on one or two great men, but on the masses being brought to Jesus Christ and led to take up the cross of self-denial for His sake.

F. W. AVELING, *Christian World Pulpit*, Dec. 21st, 1892.

REFERENCES: xii. 2.—A. Maclaren, *Christ in the Heart*, pp. 77, 91; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. v., No. 236; *Ibid.*, *Morning by Morning*, p. 180; E. Cooper, *Practical Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 207; Bishop Ryle, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 142; A. Raleigh, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 495; R. Tuck, *Ibid.*, vol. v., p. 132; H. Wonnacott, *Ibid.*, vol. xvi., p. 392; W. Page, *Ibid.*, vol. xxv., p 374; L. D. Bevan, *Ibid.*, vol. xxx., p. 200; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 84.

Chap. xii., ver. 3.—"For consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."

I. ST. PAUL, in the verses of our text, gives us a plain, serious reason for frequent meditation upon Christ's sufferings. It is *not* that we may learn to see how far human cruelty and intolerance can go; it is not that we may pride ourselves on being at least better than the savages who nailed the Saviour to the tree; it is not that we may congratulate ourselves on living in

more civilised times; it is not for any reason which might turn our eyes away from Christ as the Life and the Light of men; but it is for this: "Consider *Him*, lest *ye* be weary and faint in your minds."

II. Christ's life, then, as the pattern life, is what is set before us here. Consider Him, for as He did, so must ye strive to do. The death and passion of the Son of God is the standard by which to measure any efforts of ours. There is a voice within us which tells us that in holiness and the faithful following of Christ there is, indeed, infinite happiness; that victory over evil is a triumph that is infinitely desirable; that it is far better to strive for what is noble and good, than to succumb to what is little and vile. But when these positions are to be carried out into practice, when our convictions are to be acted on every hour, when there is a countless host of disturbing influences at work, busy in their efforts to unbalance our minds and to lead us astray, then the great danger is lest we should say the life-long struggle is too hard, the constant watchfulness required of us is too great a strain. It is in considering Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself that we shall learn—by slow degrees, but we shall learn—not to be weary or faint in our minds.

A. JESSOPP, *Norwich School Sermons*, p. 119.

REFERENCES: xii. 3.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xviii., No. 1073; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. iv., p. 232; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xviii., p. 175; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. x., p. 58; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. x., p. 83.

Chap. xii., vers. 3-13.—"Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth."

I. CHASTISEMENT is sent by fatherly love. There, where we are most sensitive, God touches us. The thorn in the flesh is something which we fancy we cannot bear if it were to be lifelong. We have emerged, as it were, out of a dark tunnel, and fancy that the rest of our journey will be amid sunlit fields. We have achieved steep and rugged ascents, and imagine the period of great and exhausting exertion is over. The trial deepest and sorest seems to leave us for a while, yet it returns again.

II. "Afterwards." Does not this world search and try us? God forbid that we should forget the chastening of the Lord, that we should "get over" sorrow, or be comforted like the world. *Now* is our afterwards, peace and godliness to-day—by reason of yesterday's sorrow and trial.

III. The cross of Christ is despised and hated, not merely by self-righteous Jews and wise and worldly Greeks, but within the professing Church the Apostle weeps over many who are enemies of the cross of Christ, not of the doctrine that Christ died instead of sinners, but of the teaching that we have been crucified with Him and have been planted in the likeness of His death; that we have been saved, and are being saved, not from death, but out of death; that, dying daily the painful death by crucifixion, we live the spiritual resurrection life together with and in Christ. By affliction and the inward crucifixion we learn to seek our true life, treasure, strength, and joy, not in earthly affections, possessions, pursuits, and attainments, however good and noble, but in Him who is at the right hand of God; and the end will be glory.

A. SAPHIR, *Lectures on Hebrews*, vol. ii., p. 371.

Chap. xii., ver. 4.—"Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin."

IT belongs to a good man to strive against sin. It sounds like a contradiction, indeed, for how should a good man have any sin to strive against? Nevertheless it is true; for as absolute goodness is not to be found in this fallen world, we must be willing to accept those efforts after it which seem to imply that the idea of it at least exists in the mind and the desire in the heart, while it is exemplified only in a very subordinate degree in the life. The doctrine of the text is, that all Christians are specially called and committed to a warfare with sin, a striving against it, even unto blood. Consider

I. The nature of the striving. (1) It is really a striving; that is to say, it is really a difficult thing. It is not a mere figure of speech; it is the most difficult thing that any human being can attempt. He who addresses himself to it must lay his account with many a sharp and terrible conflict, not in the arena of the world alone, but in the more awful, even the invisible, arena of his own soul; and in view of this he must be careful to grasp the sword of the Spirit and the shield of faith, and by watchfulness and prayer to "gird up the loins of his mind." (2) It is a striving against sin as sin. Men of the world sometimes strive against sin after a fashion, but their striving is very different from that referred to here. (*a*) It is partial; (*b*) it is superficial; (*c*) it is only occasional. Such individuals may resist to-day, but they indulge to-morrow. The believer's striving is universal and persistent.

II. Look next at some considerations fitted to sustain and encourage us in it. And here notice (1) That help is promised. Were it not so, it would be idle to begin it. We should speedily fail. But God sends us not on this warfare at our own charges. He has provided us with weapons. When the believer goes forth behind the shield of faith to duty and conflict, God goes forth to meet him, and joining His power to the creature's weakness, giveth him the victory over every foe. (2) The longer the striving is continued the easier it becomes. This is a law of our nature. It is embodied in the common saying that practice makes perfect. The frequent repetition of an act ultimately establishes habit, and habit is a second nature, frequently stronger than nature itself. (3) Striving is the universal law and condition. No more is required of us than has been required of all who have reached the goal. We are only asked to walk in the footsteps and accept the experience of all who have gone before us to the celestial heights, and it will be the same with all who come after us, to the end of time. (4) There is the certainty and glory of your reward. Look less to the way, where, indeed, there is much to discourage, and more to the end of the way, where all is calm and bright. Lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh.

A. L. SIMPSON, *Sermons*, p. 187.

THE Witness of the Passion.

The Apostle in the text is addressing the Hebrew Christians and encouraging them to a conflict, and as he encourages them to a conflict, for its object, its method, and its degree, he refers them back to the Passion of the Lord. The reason is, that the Passion has in it the essence of a great witness for God and man. The verses immediately before the text show clearly that that is indeed the Apostle's meaning, and that on which he would fix their minds.

I. What was the mode of conflict? What was the meaning of the severe dignity of the Passion of the Lord? Now it may appear startling that in the Passion of the Lord we find what confuses at first, what is difficult to interpret, that, whilst we Christians call it a conflict, its method is purely passive. There is no spirit throughout of aggression; there is no attempt at attack. Certainly it is true that in this moral attitude of the Lord there are most consoling, most comforting, most invigorating lessons for the patience and endurance of a Christian. But remember that the moral attitude, the method, of the Passion,

its purely passive phase, means a great deal more than that. Like the flash of the lightning or like the track of the glacier, it makes us feel at once that we are in the presence of a force which is unmeasured and unmeasurable, of a force in the life of God. Now what is that force? The Passion in its passive character, in the moral attitude of simple forbearance and endurance, witnesses to force in the character of God. Force can be seen in a mere passive moral attitude.

II. And in the same way as there was real force there depicted in a passive attitude, so there was completeness in that attitude as it was seen in the Lord. When Jesus stood face to face with evil, when Jesus endured the Cross, resisting, not attacking, unto blood, there came out before the mind of man, before the thought of Christendom, the gathering up of every element of moral splendour in that one great glory—the glory of the sanctity of God. The witness of the Passion to the character of God is the witness to unspeakable, unapproachable holiness.

III. The Passion also witnessed to sin. The world exhibited indifference. Jesus breasted indifference with intensity. Sin teaches us to hate God, to hate one another. Jesus in the Passion met it by love. He witnessed to the sanctity of God; He witnessed to the sin of man.

W. J. KNOX LITTLE, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 257.

REFERENCES: xii. 4.—H. Wace, *The Anglican Pulpit of To-day*, p. 325; D. Jones, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xviii., p. 212; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vii., p. 118. xii. 5.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. i., No. 48. xii. 6.—G. E. L. Cotton, *Sermons in Marlborough College*, p. 476. xii. 6-11.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxx., p. 241.

Chap. xii., ver. 7 (Revised Version).—"**It is for chastening that ye endure: God dealeth with you as with sons.**"

I. THE word *endure* is no tame word. It means something widely different from insensibility, or proud defiance. Stoicism is no Christian virtue. Obstinate and contemptuous superiority to pain has no place here. This may possibly save a waste of passion in the sufferer; it may impress; it may win admiration. But all that kind of thing is far remote from the writer's thought. He drops very impressive hints about the afflictions of these Hebrews, and about the example of Christ. Christ endured the cross for the joy that was set before Him, counting its pain and its shame as light, trivial, in comparison with that. His holy soul had adequate solace and stay all through that immeasurable anguish; mental reasons mastered the flesh:

spiritual considerations sustained Him that were far mightier to support than the cross to overthrow. The Hebrews, too, were exercised, much exercised, in their afflictions, and the exercise, like a Divine alchemy, was turning every constituent of distress into gold.

II. Questions arise here that admit of only one answer. (1) Who doubts the need of chastening? Sin in one or other of its myriad forms has aggravated all the imperfections of inexperience, so that we require far surer correction and direction than a childhood and youth of innocence had ever called for. (2) Who doubts the spirit in which this chastening is inflicted? Dictated by love, directed by wisdom, aimed at the highest ends, it has every quality to keep us alike from despising it or fainting under it. (3) Who is not driven to rigorous self-examination? There is no talismanic power in afflictions, in pains and penalties, that of itself can correct and transform. Chastening calls for thought, for reflection, for faithful survey of our life, with its temper, aims, and spirit. (4) Who does not rejoice in the advance of correction and growth? "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but since have I kept Thy word."

G. B. JOHNSON, *The Beautiful Life of Christ*, p. 166.

REFERENCES: xii. 7.—F. W. Farrar, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol xxvi., p. 321. xii. 8.—T. R. Stevenson, *Ibid.*, vol. xvi., p. 412. xii. 9.—H. Melvill, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 2987. xii. 10.—E. de Pressensé, *The Mystery of Suffering*, p. 55; J. Vaughan, *Sermons*, 12th series, p. 92. xii. 11.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. ix., No. 528; *Ibid.*, *Evening by Evening*, p. 139; R. D. B. Rawnsley, *Village Sermons*, 1st series, p. 238; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 10.

Chap. xii., ver. 12.—"Lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees."

RELIGIOUS COWARDICE.*

The encouragement which we derive from St. Mark's history is, that the feeblest among us may, through God's grace, become strong; and the warning to be drawn from it is to distrust ourselves, and, again, not to despise weak brethren or to despair of them, but to bear their burdens and help them forward, if so be we may restore them.

I. Observe in what St. Mark's weakness lay. There is a sudden defection, which arises from self-confidence. Such was St. Peter's. In St. Mark's history, however, we have no evidence of self-confidence; rather we may discern in it the state of multitudes at the present day who proceed through life

* Preached on St. Mark's Day.

with a certain sense of religion on their minds, who have been brought up well and know the truth, who acquit themselves respectably while danger is at a distance, but disgrace their profession when brought into any unexpected trial.

II Christians such as Mark will abound in any prosperous Church; and should trouble come, they will be unprepared for it. They have been so long accustomed to external peace that they do not like to be persuaded that danger is at hand. They settle it in their imagination that they are to live and die undisturbed. They look at the world's events, as they express it, *cheerfully*, and argue themselves into self-deception. Next, they make concessions to suit their own predictions and wishes, and surrender the Christian cause, that unbelievers may not commit themselves to an open attack upon it. To speak plainly, a state of persecution is not (what is familiarly called) their element; they cannot breathe in it. If there be times when we have grown torpid from long security and are tempted to prefer the treasures of Egypt to the reproach of Christ, what can we do? what ought we to do but to pray God in some way or other to try the very heart of the Church and to afflict us here rather than hereafter? So may we issue evangelists for timid deserters of the cause of truth, speaking the words of Christ and showing forth His life and death, rising strong from our sufferings and building up the Church in the strictness and zeal of those who despise this life except as it leads to another.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 175.

REFERENCES: xii. 12.—*Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. i., p. 55. xii. 12, 13.—J. H. Thom, *Laws of Life*, 1st series, p. 323; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xv., p. 243. xii. 12-29.—R. W. Dale, *The Jewish Temple and the Christian Church*, p. 264.

Chap. xii., ver. 14.—**"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."**

THE Peaceful Temper.

There are many particular duties in which Christianity and worldly wisdom meet, both recommending the same course. One of these is the duty mentioned in the text, viz., that of being at peace with others. The reason which worldly prudence suggests is the quiet and happiness of life, which are interfered with by relations of enmity to others. The reason which religion gives is the duty of brotherly love, of which the peaceful disposition is a part. But the frequency of the advice,

under either aspect, is remarkable, and shows that there is some strong prevailing tendency in human nature by which it is opposed. Let us examine what that tendency is.

I. When we examine the tempers of men, the first thing we observe is that people rush into quarrels from simple violence and impetuosity of temper, which prevents them from waiting a single minute to examine the merits of the case and the facts of the case, but carries them forward possessed of a blind partiality in their own favour and seeing nothing but what favours their own side. (2) Again, there is the malignant temper, which fastens vindictively upon particular persons, who have been either the real or the supposed authors of some disadvantage. (3) There are some persons who can never be neutral or support a middle state of mind. If they do not positively like others, they will see some reason for disliking them; they will be irritable if they are not pleased; they will be enemies if they are not friends.

II. Peace implies the entire absence of positive ill-will. The Apostle says this is our proper relation toward all men. More than this applies to some, but as much as this applies to all. He would have us embrace all men within our love so far as to be in concord with them, not to be separated from them. Separation is inconsistent with Christian membership. On the other hand, he knows that more than this must, by the limitations of our nature, apply to the few rather than to the mass and multitude; he fixes then upon this, nothing higher and nothing lower; he fixes upon the middle ground of peace as our proper relation towards the many. You must not, he says, be at peace only with those to whom you are partial; that is easy enough. You must be at peace with those towards whom you entertain no partiality, who do not perhaps please you or suit you. This is the rule of peace which the Gospel lays down, and it must be fulfilled by standing guard at the entrance of our hearts and keeping off intruding thoughts. It was not without design that following peace and holiness were connected by the Apostle. A life of enmities is greatly in opposition to growth in holiness. All that commotion of petty animosity in which some people live is very lowering; it dwarfs and stunts the spiritual growth of persons. Their spiritual station becomes less and less in God's sight and in man's. In a state of peace the soul lives as in a watered garden, where, under the watchful eye of the Divine source, the plant grows and strengthens. All religious habits and

duties, prayer, charity, and mercy, are formed and matured when the man is in a state of peace with others.

J. B. Mozley, *University Sermons*, p. 203.

I. Even supposing a man of unholy life were suffered to enter heaven, he would not be happy there, so that it would be no mercy to permit him to enter. We are apt to deceive ourselves, and to consider heaven a place like this earth; I mean, a place where every one may choose and take his own pleasure. But an opinion like this, though commonly acted upon, is refuted as soon as put into words. Here every one can do his own pleasure, but there he must do God's pleasure. Heaven is not like this world; it is much more like a church. For in a place of worship no language of this world is heard; there are no schemes brought forward for temporal objects, great or small, no information how to strengthen our worldly interests, extend our influence, or establish our credit. Here we hear solely and entirely of God; and therefore a church is like heaven, because both in the one and in the other there is one single sovereign subject—religion—brought before us. When, therefore, we think to take part in the joys of heaven without holiness, we are as inconsiderate as if we supposed that we could take an interest in the worship of Christians here below without possessing it in our measure.

II. If we wished to imagine a punishment for an unholy, reprobate soul, we perhaps could not fancy a greater than to summon it to heaven. Heaven would be hell to an irreligious man. We know how unhappy we are apt to feel at present when alone in the midst of strangers or of men of different tastes and habits from ourselves. How miserable, for example, would it be to have to live in a foreign land, among a people whose faces we never saw before, and whose language we could not learn! And this is but a faint illustration of the loneliness of a man of earthly dispositions and tastes thrust into the society of saints and angels. How forlorn would he wander through the courts of heaven!

III. If a certain character of mind, a certain state of the heart and affections, be necessary for entering heaven, our actions will avail for our salvation chiefly as they tend to produce or evidence this frame of mind. Good works are required, not as if they had anything of merit in them, not as if they could of themselves turn away God's anger for our sins or purchase heaven for us, but because they are the means, under God's

grace, of strengthening and showing forth that holy principle which God implants in the heart, and without which we cannot see Him. The separate acts of obedience to the will of God, good works as they are called, are of service to us as gradually severing us from the world of sense and impressing our hearts with a heavenly character.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. i., p. 1.

REFERENCES: xii. 14.—A. K. H. B., *The Graver Thoughts of a Country Parson*, 3rd series, p. 124; W. Landels, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 401; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 359; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. x., p. 80. xii. 14, 15.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xvi., No. 940.

Chap. xii., vers. 14-18.

PEACE and Holiness.

The two exhortations to follow peace with all men and that holiness without which none can see the Lord comprise the whole Christian life.

I. The characteristic feature of the Church ought to be the spirit of peace. Christians are faithful to God, and to His truth; their testimony is against sin and unbelief in the world, against hypocrisy and unfaithfulness in the Church; but as love is their life element, so peace is their characteristic. If God's peace is within us, we love the brethren and all men. We are able to deal with them tenderly and calmly. Humility, affection, and helpfulness characterise the son of peace; for he is always praising the boundless grace of God in which he stands.

II. Holiness. Christ is made unto us sanctification. If only holiness can admit us to the blessed vision of God, it must be Christ's; for imperfect holiness is as great a contradiction as unclean purity. The warfare is painful, for sin is still *in* us. It is not like a garment that we wear. It has entrenched itself in our flesh; that is, the old Adam-nature of body, soul, and spirit. Hence cleaving to Christ and our holiness in Him is crucifixion of the flesh, and that is painful. Let us study the epistles of the Apostle Paul, and learn the solemn and awful character of the Christian life, warfare, and race, the constant need of watchfulness and concentration of energy, of diligence, self-restraint, and self-denial. But let us learn from them that it is a blessed and joyous thing to follow the holiness, to abide in the light and love of God, to dwell in Him who is light, and in whom is no darkness at all, who is love, and who hath shed abroad His love in our hearts.

A. SAPHIR, *Lectures on Hebrews*, vol. ii., p. 388.

REFERENCES: xii. 15.—E. Bersier, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 322;

Outline Sermons to Children, p. 267; J. H. Hitchens, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 22. xii. 16, 17.—S. A. Tipple, *Ibid.*, vol. xiii., p. 139. xii. 17.—J. Vaughan, *Sermons*, 9th series, p. 85; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iii., p. 317; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xiv., p. 172. xii. 18-24.—Parker, *Cavendish Pulpit*, 1st series, p. 148.

Chap. xii., ver. 16.—**"Lest there be any profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright."**

PROFANITY in the Home.

In Scripture there are few characters more profitable for study than Esau. Whether we look at his circumstances, or his temper, or the line along which the tragedy of his life developed, we get nearer to this man, and find in him more that resembles ourselves, more that resembles the pitiful facts and solemn possibilities of our own lives, than we do in connection with almost any other character in either of the two Testaments. Here is a man who was not an insane or a monstrous sinner, a Lucifer falling from heaven, but who came to sin, who came to fatal irredeemable sin, in the common human way: by birth into it; by the sins of others as well as his own; by everyday and sordid temptations; by carelessness and the sudden surprise of neglected passions. Esau is not a repulsive, but a lovable, man; and we know that if one is to learn from any character, one's love must be awake, and take her share in the learning too. There is everything about Esau to engage us in the study of him. The mystery that haunts all human sin, the pity that we feel for so wronged and so genial a nature, only make clear to us more fully the central want and blame of his life. Perhaps we may discover it to be the central want and blame of our own.

I. Hereditary sinfulness. First, then, Esau *was sinned against from his birth.* The problems of heredity and of a stress of temptation for which he was not responsible appear in his case from the very first. His father and mother were responsible for much of the character of their son. It has always seemed to me a strange thing that in the otherwise beautiful marriage service of the Church of England the example of Isaac and Rebecca should be invoked for each new-wedded pair; for Isaac and Rebecca's marriage was the spoiling of one of the most beautiful idylls that ever opened on this earth of ours. It began in a romance, and it ended in the sheerest vulgarity; it began with the most honourable plighting of troth, and it ended in the most sordid querulousness, and shiftiness, and falsehood. This was just because, with all its grace and all its wonder, the fear of God was not present, because, with all

the romance, there was no religion, and, with all the giving of the one heart to the other, there had been no surrender of both to God. The Nemesis of picturesqueness without truth is always sordidness; the Nemesis of romance without religion is always vulgarity; and vulgarity and sordidness are the prevailing notes of Isaac and Rebecca's wedded life.

II. Evil home influence. Our text calls Esau "a profane person," and this predominant aspect of his character he got at home. The Greek word for "profane" means literally that which is trodden, which is not closed to anything, but may be passed over, used, and trodden by who will. It is equivalent to a word in a notice we often see in our own towns: "No Thoroughfare." "Profane" means "thoroughfare," and had a Greek been wanting to put up "No Thoroughfare" upon any street, he would have expressed it probably in the original word in this text: "Not Profane." It was first applied to the ground outside sacred enclosures or temples. It meant ground that was common and public—profane. That which lay in front of the fane or temple is thus the adequate translation of the original Greek. Now such was the home Rebecca made for her sons, a home which was not walled in by reverence and truth, and the steadfast patience of father and mother. The falsehood was permitted in its most sacred relations; petulance, vulgar haste, foolishly strong language, and lies found free course across its holy of holies—the mother's lips. Profane home, indeed, when a mother's temper spoiled the air, and her ambitions trampled down her elder son's rights, her younger's honour, and her poor blind husband's weakness. The mother who thus profaned her home could not be expected to do otherwise with the heart of her son. Esau's was an open heart, as far as we can see—a naturally free and unreserved heart. You know the kind of man. He has fifty doors to the outer world, where the most of us have only two or three; and except angels be sent of God Himself to guard these, the peril and fatality of such a man are immense. Friends and foes alike get far into him; the citadel of his heart lies open to all who come near. But instead of angels poor Esau had by him only tempters—a tempter in his brother and a tempter in his mother. Unguarded by loving presences, unfilled by worthy affections, his mind became a place across which everything was allowed to rush, across which his own mother's lips poured the infection of her waywardness, and across which the commonest passions, like hunger, ran riot, unawed by the presence of any command-

ing principle. That is what the text means by a "profane person"—an open, common character, unfenced, unhallowed, no guardian angel at the door, no gracious company within, no heavenly music pealing through it, no fire upon the altar, but open to his dogs and his passions, to his mother's provocations, and his brother's fatal wiles.

III. An impregnable heart. Finally, let us get back to this word "profane," for it is the centre of the whole evil. Be on your guard, then, against the little vices. It is they that first desecrate the soul. Take the virtue of truth. It seems to many an innocent thing to tell certain kinds of lies—I am sure we have all fallen under the temptation—society lies, business lies, rhetorical lies, lies prompted by pure selfishness, lies prompted by mistaken kindness. Now that is a fatal mistake, fatal for eternity. The character whose doors lie open to these visitors is the character that is open to anything, anything except what miserable fear and selfishness will in the end keep out, namely, the more rampant forms of vice. To everything else such a character lies open. Admit *them*, and you can keep nothing out. You are certain some day to be betrayed by them into larger and more fatal issues.

G. A. SMITH, *Christian World Pulpit*, August 17th, 1892.

THE Religious Standard of Value.

I. Esau's act was the act of one who had in him that disregard for the claims of things sacred which constitutes the essence of profaneness. Esau's temper was, like Saul's, of the earth, earthy, or, as we now say, purely secular. Both represent a type of character which may have many of the elements of popularity, many amiable or estimable qualities, but nothing of what Scripture calls faith, no real interest in the spiritual and the unseen. High spirits, good-nature, generosity, a fondness for manly exercises, a fearless gallant bearing, a frankness of speech which, at any rate, scorns all shyness—these are well enough in their way, but are, after all, a poor outfit for a child of the great covenant, in which are gathered up the hopes of the world. They are ruined and rendered useless for any high purpose by fickleness, unsteadiness, want of faith and want of principle, wayward and selfish worldliness.

II. Esau does not always wear the goatskin raiment of the skilful Eastern hunter; he passes in society often enough as a finished English gentleman. Are there not baptized persons, calling themselves Christians with a certain degree of sincerity,

who habitually despise a birthright still more august and precious than Esau's? They do not, we will suppose, reject Christianity as incredible, but they never allow it to be a power in their life. Their interests are all elsewhere, perhaps in a purely material region, perhaps in a higher, but still an unspiritual, sphere. A servant of Christ will make it his rule to test all weights in the balances of the sanctuary; he will honestly endeavour to call that good which Christ calls good and call that evil which Christ calls evil; he will regard nothing as really expedient or profitable which interferes, or which is even likely some time to interfere, with loyalty to that Master in whose service alone is true liberty and happiness.

W. Bright, *Morality in Religion*, p. 233.

Reference: xii. 16.—J. Thain Davidson, *Forewarned—Forearmed*, p. 3.

Chap. xii., ver. 17.—"He found no place for repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears."

Repentance.

I. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews is speaking in this passage of Esau—a reckless young man parting with spiritual advantages without any thought of their real value, finding that the loss of them involves the loss of temporal advantages too, and trying in vain to recover the temporal advantages which in a moment of recklessness he had parted from for ever. A man squanders his money, and he is very sorry for it, and wishes he had not done so; but he cannot get back his money, even though he seeks it earnestly and with tears. A man by dissipation ruins his health, and when he is lying on a sick-bed, he is very sorry for it, and he wishes he had never been such a fool, and that he could recover the health which he has parted from for ever. It is easier to harden the heart than to have the softness restored; it is easier to blunt our feelings than to recover for them their elasticity and acuteness. And then the man, though, for a time at least, he may be sorry, makes no great change; he finds a change very difficult, if not impossible, and he finds, therefore, no place for repentance, though he seek it for a moment "even with tears."

II. We cannot expect that every effect of sin is to be entirely done away with. God intends that we shall still feel the scourge of our sins, even when, by His mercy, we are freed from their dominion; and the gospel of Jesus Christ is this, that, though sin has made men slaves, they may be emancipated.

If the mercy of God in Jesus Christ visits us, and we turn to Him with full purpose of amendment, though the temporal consequences of our sin may be beyond recall and must continue for ever, yet, by His operation on the heart, God brings deliverance to the enslaved soul. The death of Christ speaks of our justification, and removes for those who turn to God the penalty which is hanging over them for sins past; the sanctification through the gift of the Holy Spirit makes the reconciled sinner to grow in holiness, and brings him back to the state which he had lost by the sin he had committed.

ARCHBISHOP TAIT, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvii., p. 97.

ESAU'S Birthright—Irreparable Follies.

I. The writer is here speaking to Jewish Christians, pleading examples from the early history of their own race, to which they ever turned with reverence and fondness. He is warning them of the danger of forfeiting in carelessness the inheritance which belonged to them as Christians. They were in danger of undervaluing it. In the sense of present isolation from the mass of their countrymen, of hunger for the visible tangible support of ordinances in the old religion from which they had separated themselves, in the pressing fear of deadly persecution, they were losing heart and hope. They were losing, so he argues all through the eleventh chapter, that crowning grace to which their nation, through its long line of patriarchs, heroes, prophets, had owed its peculiar greatness—the grace of faith, of trust in the invisible, of power to live and die in hope, not having received the promises. In this chapter for the moment he has turned to the other sight. He suggests from their own history an instance of one who lacked this power, who in a moment of weakness sold the future for the present, and who found that that moment's work was irreparable. He found no place of repentance. He could never again to any purpose change his mind. It is the type of our irretrievable acts, but in an especial way of irretrievable choices made under such circumstances as those under which Esau made his choice—in the heat and weakness of youth. A single heedless act with unalterable results.

II. How often is the story repeated. The character of Esau, drawn in the bold natural outlines of a simple age, is one that cannot fail to find its likeness among the young. Bold, vigorous, his father's favourite, fond of outdoor life

and adventure, generous even in his after-years, as we see from his meeting again with Jacob, here surely was the making of a fine character. Yet, even as in Saul and David, we should have been wrong. Something is wanting, something that cannot be replaced. And sooner or later the want shows itself, stamps itself indelibly in an act of folly that cannot be undone. We know the thoughtlessness that leads to loss of innocence, to the missing of golden opportunities. In spite of everything, the birthright, in the best sense of all, is still ours. Yet even in that sense too we may cast it away.

E. C. WICKHAM, *Wellington College Sermons*, p. 27.

ESAU'S VAIN TEARS.

I. Look at the history which is here held up before us, a solemn warning. There is nothing in Genesis about Esau's vainly seeking for repentance, but there is an account of his passionate weeping and loud entreaties that he yet might obtain a blessing from Isaac's trembling lips. There is bitter sorrow for what had passed, and that is repentance. And there is earnest desire that it might be different. In what may be called its secular significance there are in Esau's case as recorded in Genesis both the elements of a decided alteration of mind and purpose, and a penitence and sorrow for the past.

II. Look at the lessons which this story teaches us. There may come in your life a time when the scales will fall from your eyes, and you will see how insignificant and miserable are the present gratifications for which you have sold your birthright, and may wish the bargain undone which cannot be undone. You cannot wash out the bitter memories, you cannot blot out habits, by a wish. The past stands. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

III. Notice the misapprehension which these words do not teach. They do not teach that a man may desire to repent with tears, and be unable to do so. If a man desires to repent, there must be in him some measure of regret and sorrow for the conduct of which he desires to repent considered as sin against God; and that is repentance. Nor do the words teach that a man may desire to receive the salvation of his soul from God and not receive it. To desire is to possess, to possess in the measure of the desire and according to its reality. There is no such thing in the spiritual realm as a real longing unfulfilled. The Gospel proclaims that whosoever shall ask will receive, or rather that God has already given, and that nothing but

obstinate determination not to possess prevents any man from being enriched by the fulness of God's salvation.

A. MACLAREN, *Christian Commonwealth*, Oct. 22nd, 1885.

REFERENCES: xii. 17.—L. Cheetham, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xix., p. 241; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vii., p. 144.

Chap. xii., vers. 18, 22.—**"For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched. But ye are come unto Mount Sion."**

SINAI and Sion.

I. The points of contrast in the text are, that Sinai was the emblem of a sensuous, and Sion of a spiritual, economy, and that Sinai was a system of rigour, and the Gospel is a system of love. Sinai is represented as the mount that might be touched, that is, something palpable, the emblem of a material framework, of a system of gorgeous ceremonies and local shrines, and of impressiveness of external appearance. This was very largely characteristic of the system of Judaism. The giving of the law, for example, was an overwhelming address to the senses of the awed multitude. Of course there was an inner life in all this, at least in the palmy days of Judaism—a vital heart pulsing beneath that drapery of symbol. But in the time of the Saviour—the Incarnation—the religion of too many had become only rubric and creed; the shadow was still grasped tenaciously, but the substance was gone; the whole system was like a corpse awaiting its embalmment, all ready for burial, so that the sepulchre were but in a garden. And this very sensuousness of Jewish worship necessitated the appointment of sacred places and a central temple of worship.

II. But, in contrast with this pomp of ceremonial and localisation of interest, ye are come to the spiritual Sion, filled with the inner man and with lively human stones building up a spiritual house. God on Sinai gave to the Hebrews a law; God on Sion hath given to the people a life: and now that the age of visible symbol has passed away, the Lord speaks no longer from the lips of seers or from any chosen or exclusive lawgiver. Religion, as the Gospel sets it before you and asks you to receive it, comes, so to speak, in the bareness of the Saviour's incarnation. No pomps attend it; no patronage commends it to our regard; its glory is not of this world; it stands alone upon the banks of our modern Jordan, unattended by any retinue of circumstance, a living, holy, independent stranger, without form or comeliness to the beauty-seeking eye of nature;

it is loved, and it must be loved, for itself alone; it has no preferments in its gift, save those that are beyond the grasp of human hands; it calls men to no reluctant duty, and it offers to mortal weakness no compromises: it only offers the succour of a grace that will stoop down from heaven to help it up.

III. The Sinaitic was a rigorous discipline; the Gospel is a system of love. Our God is not remote, but near. Our very threatenings are fringed with sunlight. Our every precept has a promise. The service to which Christianity invites you is not a drudgery, but a healthful lucrative labour. When the love of God is shed abroad in the heart, when the man is come to Sion and is happy in its citizenship, he rejoices that glorious things are spoken of his city. Everything about him is congenial, not constrained; intimacy, not distrust and distance; the calm of a soul that revels in sunshine, not the unrest of a spirit where tempest mutters and broods. He is satisfied with God's likeness; his delight is in the law of the Lord.

W. M. PUNSHON, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 3424.

Chap. xii., vers. 18-25.

THE Blessedness of the Christian Life.

A Christian Jew is writing to Christian Jews, who stand in some danger of falling back to the religion they had abandoned. This writer is here, as every one sees, contrasting the two systems, the old and the new, the law and the Gospel, with a view to show—which is indeed the thing he is showing all through his letter—that the step from Moses to Christ had been in every respect a step forward and upward, that everything which they appeared to lose in forsaking Moses had been more than recovered in finding Christ.

I. If on Sinai all was material and all was alarming, in the Gospel, on the contrary, everything is spiritual, everything speaks of peace. In the first place, to the material, changeable mountain there is set in opposition the fair God-guarded city of peace, the metropolis of the saints, not a metropolis to be sought for among the sons of earth—a spiritual dwelling-place for pure spirits, temple and capital in God's moral realm, that hath perchance no local habitation anywhere, yet gathereth into its ample and ordered enclosure every lowly and loving heart throughout the Almighty's moral universe. The writer pictures for us the felicity, the tranquillity, the permanence, of that vast assemblage of spiritual beings, knit into a state under the reign of God, under the law of a reconciled and gracious Father.

II. The language in which these angelic inhabitants of Sion are described here, the force of which is not well brought out by our version, suggests a vast convocation assembled on some solemn day for stately and joyous festivity. It carries with it associations of sacred leisure and rhythmic song. It recalls those lovely paradises in which the angelical painter of Fiesole has depicted the mirth of heaven, with its unfading verdure, its golden pomp, its troops of happy spirits, that proclaim their gladness in musical cadence and reverent dance.

III. Men and angels are gathered into one brotherhood; but how and where? Gathered to their common King. The name of Jesus stands last on this mighty catalogue, the crowning name to make our privilege and our blessedness complete. But in the order of your experience and God's grace it comes first of all. There shall fly back at Jesus' word—He only speaks the "open sesame" of heaven—the everlasting golden gates that were barred against my importunity and yours, and the meanest of us all, the worst of all for whom this Mediator's death avails, who have fled for refuge to this Surety, shall be judged worthy to walk the shining pavements of God's heavenly city, to mingle in the pure festivity of its inhabitants, and to rest for ever in the shelter of its sure defence.

J. Oswald Dykes, *Sermon Year Book*, vol. i., p. 183.

Chap. xii., vers. 18-29.

Mount Sinai and Mount Zion.

In this passage are mentioned seven great and solemn heavenly realities.

I. Mount Zion. Mount Sinai represents the law. It manifests the majesty of God above us as creatures, the wrath of God against us as sinners; it reveals to us God's judgment and our condemnation; it convinces us of our guilt and of our strengthlessness; it represents the state of fear and darkness, of distance and alienation from God. It is winter, without sunshine, without flower and fruit, without the song of birds, the melody of praise.

II. Mount Sinai has passed away. It was only temporary. God touched it, but did not abide there. There is another mount, even Zion. Mount Sinai represents the law, temporary and intermediate; Mount Zion the Gospel, eternal and abiding. Sinai is connected with God's dealings with man according to responsibility, Mount Zion with the eternal election of grace.

III. We have come to myriads of angels. The moment we

came to Christ, He brought us unto all the angels, who rejoice in the salvation of sinners.

IV. We have also come to the general assembly of the Church of the first-born ones, whose names are written in the heavens. Believers possess, by virtue of their union with Jesus, the rights and privileges of primogeniture. Their names are enrolled in the list of the heavenly city. When we come to Jesus we enjoy communion with all the saints.

V. In this blessed city of God there is no condemnation, there is no more judgment. But there is order, rule, government, to which all render obedience with joy and praise.

VI. We have come to the Mediator of the new covenant. The same Jesus who died for us is on the throne.

VII. We have come to the blood of sprinkling. Christ is set forth by God a propitiation, and faith beholds the blood of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary as a great reality.

A. SAPHIR, *Lectures on Hebrews*, vol. ii., p. 405.

REFERENCES: xii. 19.—J. W. Lance, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xviii., p. 261. xii. 22.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 147. xii. 22-24.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxviii., No. 1689; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. ix., p. 286; G. W. Conder, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 106; H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, vol. xi., p. 362.

Chap. xii., vers. 22, 23.

WHERE and with whom faith lives.

I. Where faith lives. (1) The life of a man who has truly laid hold of Jesus Christ, and so is living by faith, is on its inward side—that is, in deepest reality—a life passed in the dwelling of the great King. (2) The privilege has for its other side a duty; the duty has for its foundation a privilege. For if it be true that the real life of every believing soul is a life that never moves from the temple-palace where God is, and that its inmost secret and the spring of its vitality is communion with God, what shall we say of the sort of lives that most of us live? Does it not sound far more like wrong than truth to say of people whose days are shuttlecocked about by trifling cares, and absorbed in fleeting objects, and wasted in the chase after perishable delights, that they "are come unto Mount Zion," and dwell in the presence of God? The old fable of a mountain of loadstone which drew ships at sea to its cliffs is true of this Mount Zion, which is exalted above the mountains that it may draw hearts tossing on the restless sea of life to the "fair havens" beneath its sheltering height. There is no dread, though there is reverence, and no fear, though there is awe, in

the approach of those who come through Jesus Christ, and live beneath the smile of their reconciled God and Father. (3) If you are living by faith, you do not belong to this order in the midst of which you find yourself. See that you keep vivid the consciousness, that you cultivate the sense, of having your true home beyond the seas; and look out as emigrants and colonists in a far-off land do to the old country, as being *home*.

II. With whom does faith live? Of companions for us, in our lonely earthly life, there be two sorts, and as to both of them the condition of recognising and enjoying their society is the same, viz., the exercise of faith. (1) We have a better face brightening the unseen than any angel face. But just because Jesus Christ fills the unseen for us, in Him we are united to all those of whom He is the Lord, and He is Lord of men as well as angels. And we too may come to the joyful assembly of the angels, whose joy is all the more poignant and deep when they, the elder brethren, see the prodigals return. (2) "The Church of the first-born." These first-born have their names written in heaven, inscribed on the register of the great city; and to that great community, invisible like the other realities in my text and not coterminous with any visible society such as the existing visible Church, all those belong and come who are knit together by faith in the one Lord.

A. MACLAREN, *Paul's Prayers*, p. 101.

Chap. xii., ver. 23.—"To the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect."

FAITH'S Access to the Judge and His Attendants.

I. Faith plants us at the very bar of God. "Ye are come to God the Judge of all." (1) Here is a truth which it is the office of faith to realise continually in our daily lives. He would be a bold criminal who would commit crimes in the very judgment hall and before the face of his judge. And that must be a very defective Christian faith which, like the so-called faith of many amongst us, goes through life and sins in the entire oblivion of the fact that it stands in the very presence of the Judge of all the earth. (2) This judgment of God is one which a Christian man should joyfully accept. It is inevitable, and likewise most blessed and desirable, for in the thought are included all the methods by which in providence, and by ministration of His truth and of His Spirit, God reveals to us our hidden meannesses, and delivers us sometimes, even by the consequences which

accrue from them, from the burden and power of our sins. It is a *gospel* when we say, The Lord will judge His people. (3) This judgment is one which demands our thankful acceptance of the discipline it puts in force. If we know ourselves we should bless God for our sorrows.

II. Faith carries us while living to the society of the blessed dead. "The Judge of all and the spirits of just men made perfect." Immediately on the thought of God rising in the writer's mind, there rises also the blessed thought of the company in the centre of whom He lives and reigns. We get glimpses, but no clear vision, as when a flock of birds turn in their rapid flight and for a moment the sun glances on their white wings, and then, with another turn, they drift away, spots of blackness in the blue. So we see but for a moment as the light falls, and then lose the momentary glory; but we may, at least, reverently note the exalted words here. These saints are perfected. The ancient Church was perfected in Christ; but the words refer, not only to those Old Testament patriarchs and saints, but to all who, up to the time of the writer's composition of his letter, had "slept in Jesus." They have reached their goal in Him. The end for which they were created has been attained. They are in the summer of their powers and full-grown adults, whilst we here, the maturest and the wisest, the strongest and the holiest, are but as babes in Christ. Mark further that these spirits perfected would not have been perfected there unless they had been made just here. That is the first step, without which nothing in death has any tendency to ennoble or exalt men. If we are ever to come to the perfecting of the heavens, we must begin with the justifying that takes place on the earth.

A. MACLAREN, *Paul's Prayers*, p. 113.

REFERENCE: xii. 23.—Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 136.

Chap. xii., ver. 24.—"And to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel."

THE Messenger of the Covenant and its Seal.

I. God's revelation to us is in the form of a covenant. The promises of the covenant are, full forgiveness as the foundation of all, and built upon that knowledge of God inwardly illuminating and making a man independent of external helps, though he may sometimes be grateful for them, then a mutual possession which is based upon these, and then as the result of all—named first, but coming last in the order of nature—the law of His

commandment will be so written upon the heart that delight and duty are spelt with the same letters, and His will is our will.

II. Jesus Christ is the Executor of this covenant. Because God dwells in Him, and the Word became flesh, He is able to lay His hand upon both, and bring God to man and man to God. (1) He brings God to man. Nowhere else is there found the confidence in the Father's heart which is the property of the Christian man, and the result of the Christian covenant. Jesus Christ brings God to man by the declaration of His nature incarnate in humanity. (2) On the other hand, He brings man to God, for He stands by each of us as our true Brother, and united to us by such close and real bonds as that all which He has been and done may be ours if we join ourselves to Him by faith. And He brings man to God because in Him only do we find the drawings that incline wayward and wandering hearts to the Father. And, still further, He is the Mediator of the covenant in so far as He Himself possesses in His humanity all the blessings which manhood is capable of deriving from the Father, and He has them all in order that He may give them all. Here is the great reservoir from which all men may fill their tiny cups.

III. Note the sprinkling of blood which seals the covenant. If Jesus had not died, there would have been no promises for us, beginning in forgiveness and ending in wills delighting in God's law. It is the new covenant in His blood. The death of Christ is ever present to the Divine mind, and determines the Divine action.

A. MACLAREN, *Paul's Prayers*, p. 124.

REFERENCES: xii. 24.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. iv., No. 211; vol. xii., No. 208; *Ibid.*, *Morning by Morning*, p. 108; *Homilist*, 4th series, vol. i., p. 181; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. viii., p. 144. xii. 24, 25.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxxii., Nos. 1888, 1889.

Chap. xii., ver. 25.—"**See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused Him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven.**"

REFUSING God's Voice.

I. We have here, first of all, the solemn possibility of refusal. It is possible for Christian people so to cherish wills and purposes which they know to be in diametrical and flagrant contradiction to the will and purpose of God, that obstinately they prefer to stick by their own desires, and, if it may be, to stifle the voice of God.

II. Note the sleepless vigilance necessary to counteract the tendency to refusal. "See that ye refuse not." A warning finger is, as it were, lifted. Take heed against the tendencies that lie in yourself and the temptation around you. The consciousness of the possibility of the danger is half the battle. "Blessed is the man that feareth always," says the psalmist. There is no security for us except in the continual temper of rooted self-distrust, for there is no motive that will drive us to the continual confidence in which alone is security but the persistent pressure of that sense that in ourselves we are nothing and cannot but fall. The dark underside of the triumphant confidence which on its sunny side looks up to heaven and receives its light is that self-distrust which says always to ourselves, "We have to take heed lest we refuse Him that speaketh."

III. Note the solemn motives by which this sleepless vigilance is enforced. The clearness of the voice is the measure of the penalty of non-attention to it. The voice that spoke on earth had earthly penalties as the consequence of disobedience; the voice that speaks from heaven, by reason of its loftier majesty and of the clearer utterances which are granted us thereby, necessarily involves more severe and fatal issues from negligence to it. "See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh," for the clearer, the tenderer, the more stringent, the beseechings of the love and the warnings of Christ's voice, the more solemn the consequences if we stop our ears to it.

A. MACLAREN, *Paul's Prayers*, p. 135.

Chap. xii., vers. 26, 27.—"Whose voice then shook the earth," etc.

THE Shaking of Sinai and Calvary.

I. That voice of Sinai was a shaking of earthly things. How were nations dispossessed? How were thrones tumbled into the dust? How was the course of human history and human life changed or directed by that shaking of Sinai? And so with the shaking voice of Calvary. Earthly things were moved, and are still moved, by the power of that voice Divine. Sinai stands like a rock in the midst of a stream, and turns and separates the current. Calvary, like a mountain round which and at whose feet, in the valley which follows the configuration of the height, a great river finds its way, directs the course of history, of nations, the movement of the world.

II. May we not reverently suggest that the voice of appeal to a forsaking God, the voice of victory in the completion of

redeeming work, the voice of final calm commending to the hands of the Eternal Father, wrought even upon the heart of the Infinite One Himself? At least, the issue was a Divine approval, a Divine acceptance, the change of threatening judgment into saving mercy.

III. There was shaking at Sinai—shaking of old temporal and earthly relations, of old human and profane habits, and in their place the appointment of things seen in the heavenly kingdom, commanded by God, "made," indeed, by men, but made "after the fashion given on the mount." But now the voice from heaven hath shaken both earth and heaven. Once again, and far more surely and distinctively, are the earthly things shaken, and there topple down all secularities and temporalities and mere passing phenomena of human thought and law of man's mere worldly duty and faith.

IV. Much, indeed, in that awful shaking has departed, and its glory, was great, and its memory is illustrious. But what remains to us? What are the things that not even the voice from heaven can shake, that not even does the voice desire to shake, but only to establish? (1) Law remains, grand, inviolable, Divine. (2) Love remains. (3) Law and love combine, and in their union salvation remains.

L. D. Bevan, *Christ and the Age*, p. 271.

Reference: xii. 26-29.—C. Kingsley, *Westminster Sermons*, p. 92

Chap. xii., ver. 27.—"And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain."

Things which cannot be shaken.

In this remarkable verse the writer goes to the heart of the philosophy of religion and of history. He declares that through the ages runs one ever-increasing purpose, and this purpose is the will of God.

I. It is said that when the King of Prussia visited the playing-fields of our Eton college he said, "Blessed is the land in which the old is ever mingled with the new, and the new ever mingled with the old." To cling to the old when the new demands our attention and our allegiance has been a constant error and indolence of mankind. They look back to the east when the west is calling them. The noontide is approaching, and they linger amid the shadows of the dawn. So it was with the Jews in the days of Paul and Apollos. Christ had come, and they could not get beyond Moses.

II. Apollos, if he was the author of this epistle to the Hebrews, tells us that there are systems, doctrines, institutions, organisations, which God continually shakes to the ground in the earthquakes of history. He does so because they have had their day and done their work, because they have become obstructive and obsolete. These things are but shadows, and men take them for the substance; these things are quivering, unreal, evanescent as the reflection of the bulrush upon the shimmering wave. But there are other things which are unshakable and eternal, as are the cedars of Lebanon, yea, as the very crags on which they stand. There are foundations which no earthquake can make to tremble, much less rock to the ground. Such was the case in the days of Christ and of the great Apostle Paul. The Jews thought that their temple, and their sacrifices, and their ritual, and their priesthood, and their Pentateuch legislation were perfect, eternal, and Divine. Christ taught them that they were imperfect and transitory, and vanishing away. That was why they crucified Him. The cross was the reward of Pharisaism to the Son of God; and as it was with the Master, so shall it be with the servants. Wherever any great human soul utters new truth, there is once more the shadow of Calvary. But God not only gives, but gives back; and what He gives back is better than what was taken away. The earthquake can rock no sure foundation. Shadows of theory, shadows of opinion, shadows of tradition, shadows of hierarchy and party, may be shaken; Christ remains.

F. W. FARRAR, *Sermons and Addresses in America*, p. 128.

THINGS Passing and Things Permanent.

I. Let us, first, illustrate the law of things which is declared in the text. (1) The Jewish dispensation was shaken, but the great realities enclosed in it remain. The coming of Christ in the flesh was the signal for the overthrow of that venerable and magnificent system. That shaking broke to pieces a Divinely instituted system, and the wreck of it can be seen in a nation still scattered over the face of the whole world. But there were things intended to remain. The daily sacrifice was taken away, but the great sacrifice of Christ abides to the world's close. The Jewish nation has ceased to be the peculiar people of God, but there is a spiritual Israel, all of them priests that offer sacrifices continually in lives holy and acceptable through Jesus Christ. (2) The forms of human society are shaken, but the principles that regulate it remain. Let us have confidence

in the fact that God made man for society; let us have faith in the experience of all past history; above all, let us have trust in the word of Christ that the things which cannot be shaken shall remain. Every chaos has its harmonising voice—"Let there be light"—every flood its ark and its rainbow. (3) Outward systems of religion are shaken, but the great truths of the Church of Christ remain. (4) The temporal circumstances of men are shaken, but the great possessions of the soul remain. (5) The material frame of man is shaken, but the immortal spirit remains. (6) The whole system of nature is shaken, but the new creation remains.

II. Consider some of the benefits that result from this law. Could not God, it may be asked, have made a permanent world at first, without requiring us to pass through this process of change, deepening often to ruin? After all, this may be asking why God has seen fit to make this world under the condition of time, for, wherever time enters, change, as far as we can see, must accompany it. This is a world into which moral disorder has entered, and the painful changes that touch us are the consequence of it—the consequence of it and yet an aid to the cure of it. Without sin there might still have been mutation, but it would have wanted the sting and the shadow. We have lost through our fall the perception of spiritual and eternal realities, and we must be made to see them through painful contrasts. It is by this process, too, that we not only see the greatness of these permanent things, but learn to cleave to them as our portion. This at least is the purpose, and if God's Spirit stirs the heart when His providence shakes the outward life this will be the result. Still further, things that are shaken preserve those things that are to remain until their suitable time of manifestation. They are wrapped round them, and fall away when men are ready for their reception. It is Christ who shakes all things, but He stands unshaken. Amid tottering commonwealths, and conflicting creeds, and shifting scenes, and dying friends, and fainting hearts, He abides ever, and He shakes all beside that we may cling more closely to Himself alone. "To whom can we go but to Thee?" and as we come we shall find a peace and strength that are the pledge of eternal life laid up in Him, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

J. KER, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 320.

REFERENCES: xii. 27.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xii., No. 690; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ix., p. 345.

Chap. xii., ver. 28.—"Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear."

THE Immovable Kingdom.

Consider the immobility of the kingdom which we receive and the service which citizenship in this kingdom requires.

I. The immovable character of the kingdom of God. Even a careless observer and superficial thinker will not fail to recognise, in the midst of all the shifting and changing scenes and events of nature and human life, a stable, ceaseless, unswerving principle, which ever emerges, and plainly controls all objects and all actions with resistless sway. All the movements of human life in social and national history lead up to this principle, or work it out in their own peculiar details. History is the illustration of that unity, and the religion of Jesus Christ, the purpose of the grace of God in the salvation of the world, is the final object of all human thought, the conclusion of the whole matter in human life, the all-embracing universal fact of the Church of God, the kingdom of God, which nothing can overthrow, which nothing can remove.

II. The phrase "kingdom of God" is used in two senses, the difference between them consisting in the extent to which the kingdom reaches. In the one case we have that entire government of God which embraces heaven and earth and hell in its sway, controlling alike the natural and the supernatural worlds; the other usage refers to that special department or division of that kingdom which is peculiarly concerned by the work of Jesus Christ in the salvation of the world.

III. It is obvious that anything which can be termed the kingdom of God must be immovable. The kingdom is not the mere work of Jesus, not the mere truth of the Gospel, not the merely external invisible community of the baptized, or even of the believers. But it is that spiritual, that only real, entity, the living faith, and love, and obedience; the loyal acceptance of Jesus Christ; the vital union of devoted souls to each other and to the Master: and this, when received, is the kingdom that cannot be moved.

L. D. BEVAN, *Christ and the Age*, p. 285.

ACCEPTABLE Service.

We observe:—

I. That our relation to God produced by the Gospel necessarily demands our service.

II. The service which we can render unto God is the continual sense of gratefulness under which we ought to live towards Him.

III. We learn the spirit in which our service should be for ever rendered—"with reverent submission and godly fear."

L. D. BEVAN, *Christ and the Age*, p. 299.

Chap. xii., vers. 28, 29.—**"Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire."**

THE Religion of the Day.

In every age of Christianity, since it was first preached, there has been what may be called a religion of the world, which so far imitates the one true religion as to deceive the unstable and unwary. The world does not oppose religion *as such*. It has in all ages acknowledged, in one sense or other, the Gospel of Christ, fastened on one or other of its characteristics, and professed to embody this in its practice; while, by neglecting the other parts of the holy doctrine, it has, in fact, distorted and corrupted even that portion of it which it has exclusively put forward, and so has contrived to explain away the whole.

I. What is the world's religion now? It has taken the brighter side of the Gospel, its tidings of comfort, its precepts of love, all darker, deeper views of man's condition and prospects being comparatively forgotten. This is the religion natural to a civilised age, and well has Satan dressed and completed it into an image of the truth. As the reason is cultivated, the taste formed, the affections and sentiments refined, a general decency and grace will of course spread over the face of society, quite independently of the influence of revelation. Is it not the case that Satan has so composed and dressed out what is the mere natural produce of the human heart under certain circumstances as to serve his purposes as the counterfeit of the truth?

II. Nothing shows more strikingly the power of the world's religion than to consider the very different classes of men whom it influences. (1) Many religious men, rightly or not, have long been expecting a millennium of purity and peace for the Church. In the case of those who have expected this, it has become a temptation to take up and recognise the world's religion as I have delineated it. They have, more or less, identified their vision of Christ's kingdom with the elegance and refinement of mere human civilisation, and have hailed every evidence of improved decency, every wholesome civil

regulation, every beneficent and enlightened act of state policy, as signs of their coming Lord. They have sacrificed truth to expedience. (2) On the other hand, the form of doctrine which I have called the religion of the day is especially adapted to please men of sceptical minds. There is a dark side to religion, and these men cannot bear to think of it. They shrink from it as too terrible. The religion of the world is but a dream of religion, far inferior in worth to the well-grounded alarm of the superstitious, who are awakened and see their danger, though they do not attain so far in faith as to embrace the remedy of it.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. i., p. 309.

REFERENCE: xii. 28, 29. — Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxviii., No. 1639.

Chap. xii., ver. 29.—"For our God is a consuming fire."

I. IN the word "fire" there is the idea of purity, which belongs as an essential quality to the element itself. It is not possible to conceive of flame as impure. The material which is being consumed may be impure, the smoke which proceeds from the flame may be thick and black and suffocating, but the flame itself, freely and fully burning, is pure, taintless, without trace of corruption or uncleanness. Who can tell the purity of God, whose symbol is a flame?

II. Fire is a defence, a means of protection, and to symbolise the strong refuges of God's people is thus often used. It is not altogether as a terror that we approach the celestial light. The fire descending and consuming the offering was a gracious and encouraging sign of acceptance and favour. The chariots and horsemen of fire proved to be the defence and guard of the man of God. So is our God the comfort and defence of His people.

III. But the energy of fire is not only repellent; it is communicative. Fire kindles; fire sets on fire. These symbols of the Divine Being suggest the communicableness of the Divine nature and activity which is the very basis of our religious life. God is the fire of the spiritual world, and He gives His being unto the natures that He has made.

IV. "A consuming fire." A deeper, darker mystery still lies behind it all. God must burn for ever the thing that is against Him. Let the sinner hold to his sin, and the wrath of God must consume that sin.

L. D. BEVAN, *Christ and the Age*, p. 315

THE Sterner Aspects of the Divine Character.

This is the aspect of Deity which some well-meaning people would wish blotted out of the Bible. That God can take vengeance to the uttermost on evil-doers seems to some persons against the notion of God.

I. The disposition in question is indeed woven, if I may so speak, of two threads: it is partly moral, partly intellectual. So far as it is moral, it comes under the head of moral cowardice, the shrinking from uncomfortable truths; so far as it is intellectual, it proceeds on the false assumption that we know the whole of the case, and have faculties to criticise it. Remember, as against this perilous as well as false assumption, that from the beginnings of philosophy the wisest of mankind have ever leaned to a distrust of human faculties in their power of mastering the whole of any moral question.

II. The Bible is popularly regarded as a comfortable book, the contents of which may be taken for granted as in unison with our consciousness, and therefore as not needing examination. Thus men, in fact, assume without inquiry that the Bible reflects their own prejudices; and the vague idea of salvation which they connect with it is not hampered with any conditions or with any which they disapprove. Then when it is pointed out that salvation is not unconditional, and that the conditions are, whether of faith or practice, of God's fixing, not man's, such popular minds are offended. That salvation without such conditions cannot be had is too stern a truth to be accepted by the self-indulgent. Do you think that such false charity will bring a man peace at the last? Dare we speak as if our God were *not* a consuming fire? Or dare we think that He will be more tolerant of those that cheapen the way of salvation under the new covenant, than of a rival altar under the old?

H. HAYMAN, *Rugby Sermons*, p. 84.

REFERENCES: xii. 29.—J. M. Whiton, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxix., p. 179. xiii. 1.—J. Aldis, *Ibid.*, p. 216. xiii. 1, 2.—M. Dods, *Ibid.*, vol. xxxvi., p. 216.

Chap. xiii., vers. 1-16.

I. HAVING warned the Hebrews against the dangers of selfishness, fleshly lusts, and covetousness, the Apostle proceeds to warn them against the dangers threatening their faith and loyalty to Christ. He reminds them of the guides, the teachers and rulers, whom God had given to them—men who laboured

in the ministry of the Lord, and sealed their testimony with their death. They had passed away, but the great Prophet, the great Apostle and High Priest, the true Shepherd, remained, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. He is the only foundation, and His the only name. The heart finds rest in thinking of Him, the Rock of ages, the eternal unchanging Son of God, our Lord, Saviour, and Mediator.

II. We who believe possess the true altar. Of the type of this altar they who served the tabernacle were allowed to eat, but the reality was hid from them. By faith we behold it, and our hearts are stablished.

III. A joyous heart is also a generous heart. When we praise the Lord, the bountiful Giver, and thank Him for the gifts of His grace, gifts so undeserved, precious, and abundant, our hearts will be liberal. We shall not forget to do good and communicate; rather shall we be anxious to discover the good works ordained for us, that we may walk in them, to find out the poor and needy, the lowly and afflicted members of Christ, that we may help and cheer them. And as both the praise and the works are *fruits* of the Spirit, brought forth by the living branches, so it is by Christ's intercession that they ascend unto the Father and are well-pleasing unto Him.

A. SAPHIR, *Lectures on Hebrews*, vol. ii., p. 423.

REFERENCES: xiii. 1-19.—R. W. Dale, *The Jewish Temple and the Christian Church*, p. 276. xiii. 2.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. viii., p. 296; H. Melvill, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 2619; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. ix., p. 99. xiii. 3.—Bishop Westcott, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxvi., p. 97; Case, *Short Practical Sermons*, p. 114. xiii. 4.—R. D. B. Rawnsley, *Village Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 267.

Chap. xiii., ver. 5.—**"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."**

I. THIS word is sufficient, because God has spoken it. We say of some men, "Their word is their bond." Shall we say less of the living One, of whose eternity our life is but a spark?

II. This word is inspiring, because it pledges the personal fellowship of God. "I will never leave thee"; not, "Angels shall be sent to thee," etc. To the Church Jesus says, "I am with you alway."

III. This word is complete, because it embraces all time. The child becomes free of the parent; the apprentice is liberated from his bonds; the hireling fulfils his day; but union with God is perpetual, and its joy is an ever-augmenting sum.

IV. This word is condescending, because it is personal in its application. It is not a pledge given to the universe as a whole; it is spoken to the individual heart, and is to be applied by each heart according to special circumstances. The whole exists for the part as well as the part for the whole. Every flower may claim the sun.

V. This word is assuring, because it is redundant in its expression. "I will never leave thee" would have been enough for a merely technical bond; more is added: we have word upon word, so that the heart cannot escape the golden walls of protection and security. Love does not study terseness; it must be emphatic: it must be copious.

PARKER, *City Temple*, vol. ii., p. 16.

REFERENCES: xiii. 5.—W. C. Heaton, *Church Sermons*, vol. i., p. 73; C. Morris, *Preacher's Lantern*, vol. ii., p. 620; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. viii., No. 477; vol. xxxii., No. 1880; *Ibid.*, *Morning by Morning*, p. 52; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 269. xiii. 7.—A. Thomas, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xviii., p. 312. xiii. 7-9.—J. Oswald Dykes, *Sermons*, p. 369.

Chap. xiii., ver. 8.—"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

THE Unchanging Christ.

Note—

I. The unchanging Christ in His relation to our changeful lives. The one thing of which anticipation may be sure is, that nothing continues in one stay. There is only one thing that will enable us to front the else intolerable certainty of uncertainty, and that is to fall back upon the thought of my text.

II. Think of the relation between the unchanging Christ and the dying helpers. Just as on the face of some great wooded cliff, when the leaves drop, the solemn strength of the everlasting rock gleams out pure, so, when our dear ones fall away, Jesus Christ is revealed, "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

III. We may apply the thought to the relation between the unchanging Christ and decaying institutions and opinions. His sameness is consistent with an infinite unfolding of new preciousness and new powers as new generations with new questions arise, and the world seeks for fresh guidance.

IV. Look at the words in their application to the relation between the unchanging Christ and the eternal love of heaven. It will be the same Christ, the Mediator, the Revealer, in

heaven as on earth, where we have daily seen and learnt to be the love of our souls through the clouds and mists of earth.

A. Maclaren, The Unchanging Christ, p. 1.

References. xiii. 8.—A. Maclaren, *Christ's Homely Touch*, p. 276; *ib.* *Sunday Sermons* (1st p. 301); *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. viii., p. 1; *Parish Pulpit*, *Lent Sermons on a Text*, p. 113; *Spurgeon, Sermons*, vol. xiii. (1867), No. 761; *Morning by Morning*, p. 301; *Plumptre, Sermons to Town and Country*, p. 1; *Parish Pulpit*, *The Preaching of the Cross*, p. 361; *Church Quarterly Review*, vol. xxiii. p. 361; *Parish Pulpit*, vol. xxiii. p. 361; *Church Quarterly*, vol. i. p. 161.—*Homiletic Magazine*, vol. xiii. p. 1; *Parish Pulpit*, *Lent Sermons*, p. 301; vol. xxiii. p. 361.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxiii. p. 81; vol. xxiii. p. 161; vol. xxiii. p. 241.—*Homiletic Review*, vol. xxiii. p. 361.—*Parish Pulpit*, *Plymouth Pulpit*, p. 361 and 1.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. x., No. 577.

Chap. xiii., vers. 13, 14.

Without the Camp.

Consider—

I. The exhortation in the text, "Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp." (1) It is a call to abiding trust in Christ as our great atoning sacrifice. (2) It is a call to separation from the world in spirit and character, and from whatever would hinder our being fellowship with Christ.

II. The relief connected with the obedience to that call, "bearing His reproach," that is, reproach for Christ. Let us here note two considerations. (1) It teaches that, while the Lord exercises a gracious sovereignty in His dealings with His people, He would have them rejoice while here in reproach and trouble. (2) It is a call to steadfastness and perseverance in the path of duty, notwithstanding all reproach and suffering.

III. The reason or argument to enforce the exhortation: "For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come." (1) The statement describes the condition of Christ's people here in the present world. (2) The thought is an argument and encouragement in pressing the exhortation of the text.

R. Evans, The Redeemer's Cry, p. 61.

Chap. xiii., ver. 14.—"For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come."

An Ever-changing Scene.

These words sum up what was certainly the Apostle's mind as to the position of Christians in this world. They were

members of a vast, and powerful, and complex association which we call human society; but, with all its great attributes, it wanted one—it wanted permanence. The world passes away, is passing away, as we work and speak. But though here we have no continuing city, yet we do seek one to come. Born amid change, surrounded by change in every form, knowing nothing by experience but change, the subject and the sport of change, the human heart yet obstinately clings to its longing for the unchanging and the eternal. Christian souls, thought the Apostle, not only long for it, but look for it. We seek that which is to come—seek it by believing that we shall one day reach it.

I. "Here have we no continuing city." We are all of us under the unalterable necessity of change in one way or other. It is the absolute condition of existing now and here. The fact may affect or impress us in many ways; it may darken or it may brighten life; it may depress or discourage, or it may inspire with undying hope. We may find in it the highest summons to courage, or the excuse for the most enervating sentimentalism. The idea of the sovereignty of God is the counterpart throughout the Psalms set over against all that is unsatisfying, disastrous, transitory, untrustworthy, not only in man's condition, but in the best that he can do. The Psalms are always the expression of the will to fulfil God's purpose, though very often of that will baffled; but they always fall back when the will is baffled, not on despair, but on the conviction that men's lives are in the hand of God.

II. The Psalmists cast themselves into the arms of God, and they were blessed. Oh that we could catch something of the contagion of that faith and hope as day by day we repeat again their wonderful words! Search as we will, we can find nothing to rest upon, nothing that will endure the real trial, but the faith of the Psalmists in the eternal kingdom of God, the faith of the Psalmists lit up by the grace and truth that came by Jesus Christ, the faith of men who are not afraid to meet their real circumstances, who are not afraid to trust in longing and self-surrender.

R. W. CHURCH, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxviii., p. 369.

REFERENCES: xiii. 14.—H. W. Beecher, *Plymouth Pulpit*, 10th series, p. 337; *Ibid.*, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 83; S. Martin, *Sermons*, p. 77; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. viii., p. 88; E. Blencowe, *Plain Sermons to a Country Congregation*, vol. ii., p. 473; *Homilist*, 1st series, vol. v., p. 101. xiii. 15.—*Clergyman's Magazine*,

vol. iii., p. 89. xiii. 16.—G. G. Bradley, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxiv., p. 337; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 189. xiii. 17.—*Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 11; R. D. B. Rawnsley, *Village Sermons*, 1st series, p. 211; E. Cooper, *Practical Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 256.

Chap. xiii., vers. 17-25.

I. The Author of peace. From all eternity God purposed in Himself the counsel of peace; and when, by reason of sin, discord and misery came into the world, the Lord always comforted His people by the promise of redemption. Our peace is complete the moment we believe in Jesus; our peace is consummated when we are presented unto the Father at the coming of our Lord. In like manner we are still looking forward to our salvation and our adoption.

II. Jesus the channel of peace. Our Lord Jesus Christ was the Paschal Lamb on Calvary. From that moment our peace was purchased, and we were identified with the Substitute. God has raised and exalted Him and us with Him; God has thereby made peace and perfection.

III. God works in us. He gives good desires, true petitions, loving words and works. He prepares us for the work in time, as He prepared the work for us in eternity Look with the eye of faith to the Lord, and you will receive not merely the commandment, but the spirit and the power to obey it; you will not merely see the Example, but be conformed to His image.

A. Saphir, *Lectures on Hebrews*, vol. ii., p. 439.

Chap. xiii., ver. 20.—"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant"—

The Great Pleas of a Great Prayer.

I. The name of God is the warrant for our largest hope. "The God of peace" wills to give to men something not altogether unlike the tranquillity which He Himself possesses. What is it that breaks human peace? Is it emotion, change, or any of the necessary conditions of our earthly life? By no means. It is possible to carry an unflickering flame through the wildest tempests, if only there be a sheltering hand round about it; and it is possible that my agitated and tremulous nature, blown upon by all the winds of heaven, may still burn straight upwards, undeviating from its steady aspiration, if only the hand of the Lord be about me. Just because God is the God of peace, it must be His desire to impart His own tran-

quillity to us. The sure way by which that deep calm within the breast can be received and retained is by His imparting to us just what the writer here asks for these Hebrews—hearts ready for every good work and wills submitted to His will.

II. Note, secondly, how the raising of the Shepherd is the prophecy for the sheep. The principal thought implied here is that where the Shepherd goes the sheep follow. Christ's resurrection and session in glory at the right hand of God point the path and the goal for all His servants. In Him there is power to make each of us as pure, as sinless, as the Lord Himself in whom we trust. He rose, and sits crowned with glory and honour. "The God that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep," has pledged Himself thereby that the sheep, who imperfectly follow Him here when He goeth before them, shall find Him gone before them into the heavens, and there will "follow Him whithersoever He goeth," in the perfect likeness and perfect purity of the perfect kingdom.

III. The everlasting covenant is the teacher and pledge of our largest desires. It is not fashionable in modern theology to talk about God's covenant to us. Our forefathers used to have a great deal to say about it, and it became a technical word with them; and so this generation has very little to say about it, and seldom thinks of the great ideas that are contained in it. But is it not a grand thought, and a profoundly true one, that God, like some great monarch who deigns to grant a constitution to his people, has condescended to lay down conditions by which He will be bound, and on which we may reckon? Out of the illimitable possibilities of action, limited only by His own nature and all incapable of being foretold by us, He has marked a track on which He will go. If I may so say, across the great ocean of possible action He has buoyed out His course, and we may prick it down upon our charts, and be quite sure that we shall find Him there. Your desires can never be so outstretched as to go beyond the efficacy of the blood of Jesus Christ; and through the ages of time or eternity the everlasting covenant remains, to which it shall be our wisdom and blessedness to widen our hopes, to expand our desires, conform our wishes, and adapt our work.

A. MACLAREN, *Paul's Prayers*, p. 80.

THE Work of God.

I. Look at the aspect in which God is here presented. (1) A God of peace. Sin banished the peace which God sent His

Son to restore; and when the world is won over to Christ, and the crowns of earth, like those of heaven, are laid at His feet, then shall God be known as the God, and our world shall be known as the abode of peace. (2) God has made peace, not peace at any price; it is peace at such a price as satisfied the utmost demands of His law, and fully vindicated His holiness in the sight of the universe. For see, by the cross where Jesus hung, mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace are embracing each other; and there the great God appears as just, and also the Justifier of all those that believe in Jesus.

II. He brought Christ from the dead. (1) In one sense the glory of His resurrection belongs to Christ Himself. His death was in a peculiar sense His own act. In no case do we lay down our lives. Who dies a natural death has his life taken from him; who commits suicide throws his away. But He who said, "I have power to lay down My life," also said, "I have power to take it up again." (2) Here our Lord's resurrection is attributed to God. His resurrection is the crown of His labours; the token of His acceptance; the fruit of His deed. The God of peace raises Him from the dead, not simply by His almighty power, but "through the blood of the everlasting covenant," His own blood, as if the blood that washes away our sins, sprinkled on His dead face, restored Him to life; sprinkled on the chains of death, dissolved them; sprinkled on the doors of the grave, threw them open. Most precious and potent blood! May it be sprinkled in red showers from God's hand on us! If that blood, in a sense, gave life to a dead Christ, shall it not impart life to us? Yes. Through its power, dead with Him to sin, crucified with Him to the flesh, and buried with Him in the baptism of the Holy Spirit, we rise to newness of life.

T. GUTHRIE, *The Way to Life*, p. 117.

Chap. xiii., ver. 20.—**"Our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep."**

THE Names of the Saviour.

I. Notice the simple, human name Jesus. (1) Let us ever keep distinctly before us that suffering dying manhood as the only ground of acceptable sacrifice, and of full access and approach to God. The true humanity of our Lord is the basis of His work of atonement, of intercession, and of reconciliation. (2) Then, further, let us ever keep before our mind clear and plain that true manhood of Jesus as being the type and pattern

of the devout life. He is the Author and Finisher of faith, the first example—though not first in order of time, yet in order of nature and perfect in degree—the pattern for us all, of the life which says, "The life that I live, I live by dependence upon God." (3) Then, again, let us see clearly set before us that exalted manhood as the pattern and pledge of the glory of the race. "We see Jesus, crowned with glory and honour." Pessimism shrivels at the sight, and we cannot entertain too lofty views of the possibilities of humanity and the certainties for all who put their trust in Him. If He be crowned with glory and honour, the vision is fulfilled, and the dream is a reality; and it shall be fulfilled in the rest of us who love Him.

II. Secondly, we have the name of office. Jesus is Christ. Is your Jesus merely the man who by the meek gentleness of his nature, the winning attractiveness of his persuasive speech, draws and conquers and stands manifested as the perfect example of the highest form of manhood, or is He the Christ in whom the hopes of a thousand generations are realised, and the promises of God fulfilled, and the smoking altars and the sacrificing priests of that ancient system and of heathenism everywhere find their answer, their meaning, their satisfaction, their abrogation? Is Jesus to you the Christ of God?

III. Lastly, we have the name of Divinity. Jesus the Christ is the Son of God. (1) The name declares timeless being; it declares that He is the very raying out of the Divine glory; it declares that He is the embodiment and type of the Divine essence; it declares that He by Himself purged our sins; it declares that He sitteth on the right hand of God. (2) Further, the name is employed in its contracted form to enhance the mystery and the mercy of His sharp sufferings and of His lowly endurance. "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered." The fuller form is employed to enhance the depth of the guilt and the dreadfulness of the consequences of apostacy, as in the solemn words about "crucifying the Son of God afresh" and in the awful appeal to our own judgments to estimate of how sore punishment they are worthy who trample under foot the Son of God.

A. MACLAREN, *The God of the Amen*, p. 8.

REFERENCES: xiii. 20.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol v., No. 277; S. A. Tipple, *Echoes of Spoken Words*, p. 19. xiii. 20, 21.—A. Raleigh, *The Way to the City*, p. 175; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xx., No. 1186; vol. xxiii., No. 1368. xiii. 20-24.—R. W. Dale, *The Jewish Temple and the Christian Church*, p. 286.

Chap. xiii., ver. 21.—"Make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

THE Great Prayer Based on Great Pleas.

I. Consider the prayer which the name excites: "Make you perfect in every good work." We should expect that all the discord of our nature shall be changed into a harmonious co-operation of all its parts towards one great end. We bear about within us a warring anarchy and tumultuous chaos, where solid and fluid, warm and cold, light and dark, storm and calm, contend. Is there any power that can harmonise this divided nature of ours, where lusts, and passions, and inclinations of all sorts, drag one way and duty draws another, so that a man is torn apart as it were with wild horses? There is one. "The worlds" were harmonised, adapted, and framed together, chaos turned into order and beauty, and the God of peace will come and do that for us, if we will let Him, so that the low schism which affects our natures may be changed into perfect harmony.

II. Note, secondly, the Divine work which fulfils the prayer: "Working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ." Creation, providence, and all God's works in the world, are also through Jesus Christ. But the work which is spoken of here is yet greater and more wonderful. There is, says the text, an actual Divine operation in the inmost spirit of every believing man. God does not work by magic. The Spirit of God, who cleanses men's hearts, cleanses them on condition (1) of their faith, (2) of their submission, and (3) of their use of His gift. If you fling yourselves into the war of worldly life, the noise of the streets and whirring of the looms, and the racket of the children in the nursery, and the buzzings of temptations round about you, and your own passions, will deafen your ears so that you will never hear the still small voice that speaks a present God.

III. Lastly, notice the visible manifestation of the inward work. God works in order that you and I may work. Our action is to follow His. Practical obedience is the issue, and it is the test, of our having this Divine operation in our hearts. There are plenty of people who will talk largely about spiritual gifts, and almost vaunt their possession of such a Divine operation. Let us bring them and ourselves to the test, Are you doing God's will in daily life in the little things? If so, then you may believe that God is working in you. If not, it is of no

use to talk about spiritual gifts. The test of being filled with the Divine operation is that our actions shall be conformed to His will. Action is the end of all. We get the truth, we get our souls saved, we have all the abundance and exuberance of Divine revelation, we have the cross of Jesus Christ, we have the gift of the Divine Spirit, miracles and marvels of all sorts have been done, for the one purpose to make us able to do what is right in God's sight, and to do it because it is His will.

A. MACLAREN, *Paul's Prayers*, p. 91.

REFERENCES: xiii. 22.—*Expositor*, 1st series, vol. vii., p. 155; Fletcher. *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 157.

JAMES.

REFERENCES: i.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. ix., p. 137; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., pp. 43, 185, 238. i. 1.—J. Exell, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 277. i. 2.—L. Davis, *Ibid.*, vol. xix., p. 113; H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, vol. xx., p. 84. i. 2-4.—*Ibid*, vol. xxvi., p. 133; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. x., p. 47; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 225: Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxix., No. 1704. i. 3, 4.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 43.

Chap. i., ver. 4.—"Let patience have her perfect work."

THE Perfect Work of Patience.

I. We can all attain to a certain amount of proficiency at most things we attempt; but there are few who have patience to go on to perfection. In the lives of almost every one there has been at some time an attempt at well-doing. It may have been as the morning cloud, and as the dew that goeth early away, but there was at least a desire to do right, and good resolutions were formed. What was wanted? Staying power. "The gift of continuance," that is what so many of us want. If genius may be described as long patience or the art of taking pains, even so those who have done for a time the will of God have need of patience that they may receive the blessings promised to them who know how to wait. Saints are those who let patience have its perfect work, who by patient continuance in well-doing seek eternal life.

II. As a rule, the time required for the production of an effect measures the value of that effect. The things that can be developed quickly are of less value than those which require longer time. You can weed a garden or build a house in a much shorter time than you can educate a mind or build up a soul. The training of our reasoning faculties requires a much longer time than the training of our hands. And moral qualities, being higher than intellectual, make an even greater demand upon the patience of their cultivator.

III. Let us remember where it is that we are to get patience in the presence of temptations and sorrows. We must go in prayer, as our Master did in the garden of Gethsemane, to the source of all strength. If He would not go to His trial

unprepared, it certainly is not safe for us to do so. By a stroke from the sword the warrior was knighted, small matter if the monarch's hand was heavy. Even so God gives His servants blows of trial when He desires to advance them to a higher stage of spiritual life. Jacobs become prevailing princes, but not until they have wrestled with temptations and prevailed.

E. J. HARDY, *Faint yet Pursuing*, p. 47.

I. HER perfect work patience ever has. Have you ever thought how this is exemplified both in the Divine guidance of the world and in the Divine care under which we all pass in the earliest years of our life? Our young life was hid with God. Our earliest years were Divinely guided. The Lord's protecting care encircled us. He watched over the throbbings of that new life which were the commencement of an immortality of existence. He in every way encircles the young life with Divine care, with a care which is inexpressibly loving and inexpressibly patient. And when the years of infancy have passed by, it may be said of the prattling, observant, eager-eyed, quick-eared little one that patience has done her perfect work.

II. All through the Christian centuries has patience been slowly doing her perfect work. Humanity has been slowly advancing under Divine guidance. Our attitude towards the past should be one of deepest reverence. We should look upon the whole field of past history as the sacred ground of humanity. God's dealings with our forefathers ought to have an undying interest for us. In our inquiries into past history, we should be animated by a desire to discern the traces of God's patience doing her perfect work. We find in reading the life of St. Bernard that he, though ofttimes passing through the midst of the grandest scenery of Europe, though he often passed by the side of that glorious water the lake of Geneva, has left no record of being at all influenced by what strikes the traveller now as being a succession of scenes of marvellous beauty. The Divine Inspirer of humanity with all that is good and noble was revealing to His servant Bernard truths upon which his thought-laden mind pondered as he moved through the heavenly beauty with which the earth is radiant to us. This beauty is discerned by us because God has opened our eyes to see it. This surely is an exemplification in the Divine education of the world of patience having her perfect work.

H. N. GRIMLEY, *Tremadoc Sermons*, p. 254.

REFERENCES: i. 5.—J. Keble, *Sermons from Advent to Christmas*

Eve, p. 321; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xiii., No. 735; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. vi., p. 92. i. 5-7.—T. Stephenson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 81. i. 6.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 219. i. 6, 7.—*Church of England Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 41. i. 9, 10.—*Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. ii., p. 150.

Chap. i., ver. 12.—"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation."

TEMPTATION Treated as Opportunity.

I. The Bible teaches us, and as Christians we believe, that there is a regular course of temptations for us in this life; that there are a number of objects and wishes constantly presenting themselves to us in the natural course of things here that we should not give way to, but resist, although they do present themselves. We see a vast number in the world who seem practically to believe that there are no such things as temptations in the world at all. Scripture is sharp and mistrustful about everything which the world offers. Distrust everything, it would seem to say, till it is proved to be safe. Think everything dangerous and deceitful. The world within you and the world without are evil, and they are placed in you and near you in order that you may have nothing to do with them, in order that by having nothing to do with them, though they are so near, you may gain a more entire and remote distance from them.

II. On the whole it depends entirely on the principle we have in our minds to begin with whether we regard a number of impulses and incitements which surround us every day as calls to induce us or as temptations to try us. In one way of looking at our state here the world is full of temptations; in another it has none. Whether the temptation be to pleasure, or to money-getting, or to hasty speech, or to presumption, there are many who will never see it in any of these cases; that is to say, they see it, but they do not see it as a temptation, but as an opportunity. It never occurs to them to take the contradictory side in the course of things here. If there is anything certain in Scripture it is that we are here in a state of warfare, and we must act as if we were. We must take the severer view of the invitations which we meet with in our course. We must look hostilely upon them, and take them at once for what they are—our foes and opponents—and then we shall have that succour which God has promised.

J. B. MOZLEY, *Parochial and Occasional Sermons*, p. 14.

REFERENCES: i. 12.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. vi., p. 95; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxxi., No. 1834; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. viii., p. 209. i. 13, 14.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. vi., p. 102; *Clergyman's*

Magazine, vol. vi., p. 94; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 19. i. 13-15.—*Ibid.*, vol. xxx., p. 339; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 156. i. 15.—A. Mursell, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 104; J. G. Horder, *Ibid.*, vol. xxx., p. 141. i. 16, 17.—C. Kingsley, *Village Sermons*, p. 25. i. 16-19.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vii., p. 375.

Chap. i., ver. 17.—"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

The Uniformity of Nature.

I. The uniformity of nature rebukes man's faint-heartedness. When we are crushed with many a bereavement, ought it to be a matter of complaint to us that nature, which has, perhaps, caused our transient anguish, should appear to treat us with total disregard? It is a salutary reminder that we make too much of our individual sorrows; that we are but parts of a vast whole; that our days on earth are but a setting forth and a beginning, not a finishing.

II. Uniformity rewards man's efforts. It we could not absolutely rely on the steady unvarying laws of nature, no knowledge could be attained, no triumphs won. The world would have been not a cosmos, but a chaos. It would have been to mankind an intolerable source of terror to live under the reign of the exceptional. But as it is, nature seems to welcome those triumphs over her which are won by obedience to her laws. If man, to his own comfort and advantage, has gained from the universe an almost illimitable power, is not that power due simply and solely to the uniformity of law?

III. This steady uniformity is our pledge of the impartial fidelity of God. So far as the management of the material universe is concerned, God has declared unmistakably that He has no favourites. He has given to material forces a law which cannot be broken. We trust Him more because there is no devilish element in nature, no wild impulse rushing with eruptions of curse and blessing into space. We begin to see that nature is but a word, is but a figure of speech, is but a fiction of imagination, is nothing in the world but a reverent synonym for the sum total of the laws which God has impressed upon His universe.

F. W. Farrar, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 337.

Collect for the Seventh Sunday after Trinity.

God is pronounced in the collect to be the Author and Giver of all good things. Whether this was intended or not, the

phrase is a most exact echo of the words of St. James in the text. There is a splendid movement in the preamble of the collect, where God is described not only as the Author and Giver of all good things, but the "Lord of all power and might." It is impossible not to feel how much we owe to Cranmer and his associates for this preamble. It is true that for this magnificent language there is a small Latin basis, but the change which has been made in it amounts to transformation.

I. What distinction can we properly draw between power and might? The terms are not really identical in meaning, and the distinction to be drawn between them is properly this, that power is the more abstract term, might or strength the more concrete. There may be power that is not excited. A man may have the power to speak, and yet may be silent. In the collect we attribute to God the perfection of power, in that He is almighty, and the perfection of might, because that omnipotence is ready to be used on our behalf without the risk of failure.

II. The name of God is His character as revealed to us. His name describes to us what He is. We have reason to pray that our nature may be so corrected that the revelation of the Deity above us may be welcome and dear. But implanting is not enough, whether it be of a seed or a graft. There must be growth. The word "increase" is familiar to us elsewhere in Scripture, as denoting an essential feature in the Christian life. Fostering care also is required, and provision for safety. We ask that we may be nourished with all goodness, and kept in the same. In reflecting on this part of the collect, the devout mind inevitably reverts to familiar passages of the Old Testament, and finds there abundant material for wholesome thought. When the Lord planted His vineyard with the choicest vine, He likewise fenced it. No one who has travelled in Palestine can have failed to observe the vast importance of the *fence* to the vineyard.

J. S. Howson, *The Collects, Epistles, and Gospels*, p. 98.

References: i. 17.—H. J. Wilmot-Buxton, *The Life of Duty*, vol. i., p. 235; *Homilist*, vol. vii., p. 179; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. i., p. 356; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 532; *Ibid.*, vol. vii., p. 215; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. vi., p. 273.

Chap. i., ver. 18.—"Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures."

The First-fruits of God's Creatures.

I. "Of His own will," or because He willed it, is given as the

reason why God bestowed on us a new life. We are to receive this assurance with the effort to profit by it, and to derive practical good from it, not with vain speculation as to the nature of God's decrees, still less with any profane and worldly thought that He distributes His blessings, like a self-willed human ruler, in an arbitrary and capricious spirit, but with a devout acknowledgment that our baptism, our knowledge of Christianity, our education, our opportunities, any progress or improvement which we have made in holiness, are not the results of our own merit, but of God's goodness. Our feeling should be one of humble gratitude, leading to more earnest efforts to deserve God's favour and to fulfil the responsibilities which He has put upon us.

II. "Begat He us." Here again St. James, no less clearly than St. Paul or St. John or than He who was the common Teacher of them all, speaks to us of that radical change of heart and principle, that conversion to God, that resurrection to righteousness, which may well be called a new birth. And this great change is here declared to be the gift of God.

III. We were begotten by the word of truth, that is, by the Gospel. We learn from this that it is only through Christianity that we can escape from sin. In Christ, and Christ alone, we shall find the new life after which we were striving.

IV. "That we might be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures." Here St. James tells his readers of God's purpose in thus calling them to a new life through the Gospel of His Son, that they might be the first-born of the great Christian household, consecrated to God. They were the beginning of the great spiritual harvest soon to be gathered in from the whitening fields, the elder brethren who were to be examples and patterns to those who were still to be born into God's family.

G. E. L. COTTON, *Expository Sermons on the Epistles*, vol. ii., p. 15.

REFERENCE: i. 18.—J. Keble, *Sermons for Saints' Days*, p. 224.

Chap. i., ver. 19.—"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath."

THE Judicial Temper.

This is one of the wisest and most difficult sayings in Holy Scripture. It commends itself to our good sense, and yet it is one of the hardest to be observed, for in one line we are bidden to be both swift and slow. Some Christian precepts can be obeyed deliberately. The propriety of obedience to

them is not only felt beforehand, but can be realised at leisure, as when we resolve to help a friend, or enter some course of procedure the entry into which is made without agitation. But in the command before us the call is likely to arrive when we are least in the mood to listen to it. Thus, however plain the precept is, it is one of the hardest to be kept. And yet it concerns all, and intimately affects the happiness and usefulness of each. Note two or three of the chief ways in which we are called to the observance of St. James's command.

I. One is seen in the formation of opinions, specially in regard to religion and the spiritual condition of our neighbour. A common fault of religious people is impatience of instruction and a readiness to pass judgment upon others. When we think that we have got hold of great truths, we are tempted to assert ourselves confidently, to behave as if there were only insignificant details left for us to learn. We are apt to show indignation at what we believe to be human blindness or ignorance. We are tempted to reverse the order of Divine precept and to become slow to hear and swift to wrath. But in truth, as we are near God, so we realise our ignorance and His tolerance. Thus, instead of being eager to deliver our verdicts and to define His will, we hold back, lest our meddling interference and short-sighted decisions should mar the working of the Divine will, if not in larger ways, yet at least in our small circle and surroundings. We check our indignation in the presence of the great tide or stream of justice which is ever fulfilling itself.

II. St James's words should be applied also in small things. We are often disturbed and upset by what we call "trifles." We equip ourselves carefully for the ascent of a mountain, and then slip upon the common stairs. We take off our heavy armour, and thinking to repose after the din of battle, are stung by a fly. But the grace of God is intended to be used in small things as well as great. So it is in what we call nature. The law of gravitation affects the apple which drops from the tree and the spheres which move on in their courses. The glory of God clothes the lily in the valley and the sun in the sky. Divine force is used equally in the construction of the mountain and that of the molehill. And so each of us has daily need for the application of the great power which rules the world.

H. JONES, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxv., p. 359.

REFERENCES: i. 21.—J. Keble, *Sermons from Easter to Ascension*,

p. 386. i. 21, 22.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxxi., No. 1847. i. 21-27. —H. Allon, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxx., p. 163. i. 22.—H. Goodwin, *Ibid.*, vol. xxxiii., p. 373; F. W. Farrar, *Ibid.*, p. 289; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vii., p. 294; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. x., p. 81.

Chap. i., vers. 22-24.—**"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves," etc.**

THE Danger of mistaking Knowledge for Obedience.

I. Knowledge without obedience ends in nothing. It is, as St. James says, like a man who looks at his own face in a glass. For a time he has the clearest perception of his own countenance; every line and feature, even the lightest expression, is visible, and by the mysteriously retentive power of the mind he holds it for a while in what we call the mind's eye; but when he has gone his way, the whole image fades, and the vividness of other objects overpowers it, so that he becomes habitually more familiar with the aspect of all other things than with his own natural face. Nothing can better express the shallowness and fleetingness of knowledge without obedience. For the time it is vivid and exact, but it passes off in nothing—no resolution recorded in the conscience, or if recorded, none maintained; no change of life, nothing done or left undone, for the sake of truth which is shadowed upon the understanding.

II. Knowing without obeying is worse than vain. It inflicts a deep and lasting injury upon the powers of our spiritual nature. Long familiarity with truth makes it all the harder to recognise, as the faces of those we most intimately know are often less distinct in our memory than those we have seen but seldom, and therefore noted all the more exactly.

III. But there is a yet further danger still; for knowledge without obedience is an arch-deceiver of mankind. The heart is a busy deceiver of the conscience; it borrows of the understanding and of the imagination visions and shadows of eternal truth, and it flatters the conscience into a pleasant belief that such are its own spontaneous dictates and intents: it cheats it into appropriating, as its own moral character, the mere shadows that lie on the surface of the intellect.

IV. This knowing and disobeying it is that make so heavy and awful the responsibilities of Christians. Steadily resolve, therefore, to live up to the light you possess. There is a unity, a sameness, and a strength about a consistent mind. The light you already have is great, and great therefore must be your obedience; and remember that to linger behind or to follow

afar off is as if you should suffer your guide to outstrip you in the night season.

H. E. MANNING, *Sermons*, vol. i., p. 117.

REFERENCES: i. 22-24.—R. Duckworth, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxvi., p. 177. i. 22-25.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxv., No. 146; vol. xxxi., No. 1848. i. 24.—J. Exell, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 365; R. S. Storrs, *Ibid.*, vol. vii., p. 39.

Chap. i., ver. 25.—"Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."

THE Perfect Law and its Doers.

I. The Perfect Law. Let me remind you how, in every revelation of Divine truth contained in the Gospel, there is a direct moral and practical bearing. No word of the New Testament is given us in order that we may know truth, but all in order that we may do it. Every part of it palpitates with life, and is meant to regulate conduct. There are plenty of truths of which it does not matter whether a man believes them or not in so far as his conduct is concerned. Mathematical truth or scientific truth leaves conduct unaffected. But no man can believe the principles that are laid down in the New Testament and the truths that are unveiled there without these laying a masterful grip upon his life and influencing all that he is. And let me remind you, too, how in the very central fact of the Gospel there lies the most stringent rule of life. Jesus Christ is the Pattern, and from those gentle lips which say, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments," law sounds more imperatively than from all the thunder and trumpets of Sinai. (1) This thought gives the necessary counterpoise to the tendency to substitute the mere intellectual grasp of Christian truth for the practical doing of it. There will be plenty of orthodox Christians and theological professors and students who will find themselves, to their very great surprise, among the goats at last. Not what we believe, but what we do, is our Christianity; only the doing must be rooted in belief. (2) Take this vivid conception of the Gospel as a law, as a counterpoise to the tendency to place religion in mere emotion and feeling. Fire is very good, but its best purpose is to get up steam which will drive the wheels of the engine. Not what we feel, but what we do, is our Christianity. (3) Notice how this law is a perfect law. It is perfect because it is more than law, and transcends the simple function of command. It

not only tells us what to do, but gives us the power to do it; and that is what men want.

II. Notice the doers of the perfect law. Several things are required as preliminary. (1) The first step is "looketh into the law." With fixed and steadfast gaze we must contemplate the perfect law of liberty, if we are ever to be doers of the same. (2) "And continueth." The gaze must be, not only concentrated, but constant, if anything is to come of it. Let me venture on three simple, practical exhortations: (*a*) Cultivate the habit of contemplating the central truths of the Gospel as the condition of receiving in vigour and fulness the life which obeys the commandment. (*b*) Cultivate the habit of reflective meditation upon the truths of the Gospel as giving you the pattern of duty in a concentrated and available form. (*c*) Cultivate the habit of meditating on the truths of the Gospel in order that the motives of conduct may be reinvigorated and strengthened.

III. Note the blessedness of the doers of the perfect law. There is no delight so deep and true as the delight of doing the will of Him whom we love. There is no blessedness like that of an increasing communion with God and of the clearer perception of His will and mind which follows obedience as surely as the shadow does the sunshine.

A. MACLAREN, *The God of the Amen*, p. 237.

I. WHAT is the Meaning of a Law of Liberty?

Men commonly look upon a law as something that restricts and confines their liberty. And they commonly think that to be at liberty signifies to be free from law and to do as they like. God trains us very much as we do our children. We begin by putting them under a rule; we send them to school; we require them to keep hours; we make them do exactly what we bid them; we do not allow them to loiter or be lazy over their work; we get them into the habit of work; we try, by putting them under a law of work, to get them to like work, to like to be busy, to feel idleness a burden, to wonder how people can like to be idle, to feel a real pleasure in having things to do and in doing them well and at proper times. See how we who are parents do naturally try to turn law into liberty, and, so far as we can, get our children to do freely and for choice what at first they do for duty and because they must.

II. Do we wish to find freedom, liberty, delight, in religion and the service of God? There is only one way to do so, and

that way is by obeying the law of God, with our own hearty choice and firm and constant endeavour, until that which begins by being law ends in being perfect liberty. "Whose service is perfect freedom." Men are apt to think that these things are opposite to one another; that where there is service there cannot be freedom, and where there is freedom there is, of course, an end to service. But no; in the true service of God is the only real, perfect, happy freedom, just as in the obedience of the law of God is the only real and perfect liberty. The Prayer-book does but echo the words of St. James. It is all one whether the words be "God's service is perfect freedom," or "God's law is perfect liberty." Either way it is the same: no freedom without service; no liberty without law.

G. MOBERLY, *Parochial Sermons*, p. 111.

REFERENCES: i. 25.—*Homilist*, vol. iv., p. 37. i. 25-27.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. vi., p. 275.

Chap. i., ver. 26.—"If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain."

THE Bridling of the Tongue.

Consider the large class of sins to which an unbridled tongue renders us liable.

I. One of the commonest employments of the human tongue is that of lying, and liars are among those to whom is specially reserved the blackness of darkness for ever; in fact, it is the devil's own primeval sin. "He is a liar," said the Lord, "and the father of it." With certain qualifications, deceit is thought little of, and may therefore be easily indulged in without giving much cause of alarm to a man who seems to be religious, and who is yet, perhaps, deceiving his own heart. The tongues of all professing Christians are not so bridled as to guide them in the narrow path of sincerity; and though lying in its gross forms may be scouted from respectable society, yet pure, unadulterated truthfulness is not always left behind.

II. So in the case of blasphemy and profane swearing. These are also sins of the tongue, which in their coarser and most revolting forms are driven out of decent company; and yet there may be milder forms of the same kind of sin, which may be much more easily committed, and with respect to which the proper management of the tongue may be a matter well worthy of the consideration of many who might fancy that no such caution is needed by them. Slander is another sin which

may be avoided by the bridling of the tongue. The management of the tongue is not, of course, the only Christian virtue, but it is a plain, manifest, practical duty, omission to perform which at once puts the stamp of spuriousness upon a man's religion. An unruly tongue, an envious tongue, a lying tongue, are all indications of something being rotten in the heart of a man's religious system; and until he has put a bridle upon his tongue and brought it into subjection to the law of Christ there can be no hope of that man's religion being such as God can approve.

HARVEY GOODWIN, *Parish Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 319.

REFERENCE: i. 26.—J. Keble, *Sermons from Easter to Ascension*, p. 416.

Chap. i., ver. 27.—"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

THE Christian Service of God.

I. The general meaning and intention of this passage is obvious. No doubt some of these early converts from Judaism, to whom the Epistle of St. James is addressed, found it very hard, trained as they had been in mere outward formalism, with no deep sense of personal responsibility, to form an adequate conception of the lofty moral purity involved in that perfect law of liberty which they had professed to accept as the law of their lives. It had not penetrated the will and become its ruling principle. They had not succeeded in freeing themselves from the bondage of the evil habits in which they had been trained; they had not learned that God as revealed to them in Christ must be worshipped with the service of a blameless life. St. James mentions a very obvious fault, that of an unbridled tongue, as an example of the habits which are inconsistent with this service. "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

II. This, however, is a mere negative view of the subject; in this St. James only gives us an instance (one out of many) of a habit by which the religious service of God is violated. He goes on further to tell us in what that service consists. And he teaches us that its most obvious and indispensable features are two: (1) active benevolence, and (2) unworldliness.

III. The religion here spoken of is the outward service of God only, and must flow from a heart changed and purified by

a living faith in Jesus Christ. It is from His Spirit that we must seek the power of rendering this religious service; and to obtain the aid and teaching of that Spirit is the first duty of our Christian calling.

G. E. L. COTTON, *Expository Sermons on the Epistles*, vol. ii., p. 28.

CHRISTIAN Service of God.

I. It is clearly wrong so to interpret St. James as to make him say literally that the whole of religion consists in acts of charity and temperance. It is manifest that every idea of religion contains in it the idea of serving God. And it is equally clear that there can be no serving God without intending to serve Him—that is, without thinking Him to have a claim on our service. When, then, St. James calls the works of charity and temperance "pure and undefiled religion," or the service of God, it is plain, by the very force of the words, that he must mean such works of charity and temperance as are done in order to serve God—that is, such as are done in faith. For if they be done without any notion of God they cannot be called a pure service to God, for they are not a service to Him at all, except accidentally; they are no service so far as regards our intention.

II. What St. James means, then, is no more than this: The Christian who would truly serve God in Christ must serve Him not in word, but in deed; and he selects especially two classes of good deeds which form, as it were, the very essence of that service: those of charity and purity. And here the lesson of the text is one peculiarly applicable. It points out what are, and ever have been, the peculiar virtues of Christianity, what all parts of the New Testament alike insist on. And they are so insisted on, not only for their importance, but also for their difficulty, because they are at variance with some of our strongest inclinations and must be practised against the greatest temptations to the contrary, because, although we may find one of the two agreeable to us, it hardly ever happens that we find both to be so; but, on the contrary, men have endeavoured to make up for neglecting the one by their great attention to the other, as if benevolent persons might be excused for their worldly-mindedness or persons of strict and pure and quiet lives might be excused for their want of active charity.

T. ARNOLD, *Sermons*, vol. vi., p. 261.

PURE Religion and Undefiled.

What is the ground of the difference of tone observable in the inspired writers (and especially in St. Paul and St. James) on the subject of true religion, one giving the most emphatic prominence to faith, the other a prominence equally emphatic to works? The ground is to be sought—

I. Partly in the truth which they set forth. There are many analogies between objects contemplated by the eye and truths contemplated by the mind. We walk abroad, and some work of art—say a house—meets our eye. We place ourselves before it to survey its architecture. The front presents certain features: columns, doors, windows, balconies, verandahs. We move round it to another point of view. The picture is then changed. On this side possibly are trellis-work and creepers; no entrance is observable, and the outlook from the windows is upon wood instead of landscape. But we have yet two more sides to survey, which may very possibly present different features still, and after that we may mount a neighbouring eminence which commands the house, and obtain a view different entirely from all the preceding, the gables and chimneys seeming to emerge from a tuft of trees. Now, as it is with real objects, so it is with real truths. If they be indeed truths, they too are solid, and have more than one aspect.

II. In the difference of their own minds. If there be many aspects of Christ, there are several inspired minds which contemplate and set forth those aspects. True religion has a body, or substantial, and a spirit, or animating, part. The body of it is faith; the spirit of it is works. And because one definition of it may contemplate its body, and another may contemplate its spirit, both definitions may be equally true, and yet both utterly different. St. James is contemplating the vitality of religion, not its mere personal appearance. He says, "Rest not content with the outward framework." The production of the framework will not satisfy the great Judge at the last day. He will push His researches beyond that. He will inquire whether the framework has shown itself alive, whether it has breathed, and moved, and walked, and wrought, and given the other symptoms of life.

E. M. GOULBURN, *Occasional Sermons*, p. 36.

REFERENCES: i. 27.—C. H. Gough, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 317; B. Wilberforce, *Ibid.*, vol. xvi., p. 97; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. v., p. 242. ii. 1-9.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 460. ii. 8.—D. Jackson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxiv., p. 157. ii. 10.

—J. H. Thom, *Laws of Life*, 2nd series, p. 167. ii. 10, 11.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xii., p. 107. ii. 10-26.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 39.

Chap. ii., ver. 12.—"So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty."

THE Law of Liberty.

Take these two words, "the law of liberty"—liberty and law. They stand over against one another. Our first conception of them is as contradictory. The history of human life, we say, is a history of their struggle. They are foes. Law is the restraint of liberty. Liberty is the abrogation, the getting rid, of law. Each, so far as it is absolute, implies the absence of the other. But the expression of the text suggests another thought, that by the highest standards there is no contradiction, but rather a harmony and unity between the two; that there is some high point in which they unite; that really the highest law is liberty, the highest liberty is law; that there is such a thing as a law of liberty.

I. First, what do we mean by liberty, the oldest, dearest, vaguest, of the words of man? I hold it to mean simply the genuine ability of a living creature to manifest its whole nature, to do and be itself most unrestrainedly. Now between this idea and our ordinary thought of law there must, of course, be an inherent contradiction. The ordinary laws of social and national life are special provisions made for the very purpose of restricting the very natures and characters of their subjects. National law does not aim at the development of individual character, but at the preservation of great general interests by the repression of the characteristic tendencies of individuals. We hear the word "law," and it has this repressive sound. We hear the noise of grating prison doors, of heavy keys groaning in their locks. We see the lines of chains or the lines of soldiers that bind the individual's freedom for some other individual's or for society's advantage. Law is constraint as yet, and is the foe of liberty.

II. The law of constraint is that which grows out of man's outward relations with God; the law of liberty is that which issues from the tendencies of a man's own nature inwardly filled with God. That is the difference. Just so soon as a man gets into such a condition that every freedom sets towards duty, then evidently he will need no law except that freedom, and all duty will be reached and done. You see then what a

fundamental and thorough thing the law of liberty must be. All laws of constraint are useless unless they are preparatory to, and can pass into, laws of liberty. This doctrine of the law of liberty makes clear the whole order and process of Christian conversion. Laws of constraint begin conversion at the outside, and work in; laws of liberty begin their conversion at the inside, and work out.

III. The whole truth of the law of liberty starts with the truth that goodness is just as controlling and supreme a power as badness. Virtue is as despotic over the life she really sways as vice can be over her miserable subjects. Here is where we make our mistake. We see the great dark form of viciousness holding her slaves down at their work, wearing their life away with the unceasing labour of iniquity; but I should not know how to believe in anything if I did not think that there was a force in liberty to make men work as they can never work in slavery. There is one large presentation of the fact of sin which always speaks of it as a bondage, a constraint, and consequently of holiness as freedom or liberation; but I believe there is no more splendidly despotic power anywhere than that with which the new life in a man sets him inevitably to do righteous and godly things. If there is one thing on earth which is certain, which is past all doubt, past all the power of mortal hindrance or perversion, it is the assurance with which the good man goes into goodness and does good things, ruled by the liberty of his higher life. Oh for such a liberty in us! Look at Christ, and see it in perfection. His was the freest life man ever lived. Nothing could ever bind Him. He walked across old Jewish traditions, and they snapped like cobwebs; He acted out the Divinity that was in Him up to the noblest ideal of liberty. But was there no compulsion in His working? Hear Him: "I must be about My Father's business." Was it no compulsion that drove Him those endless journeys, foot-sore and heart-sore, through His ungrateful land? "I must work to-day." What slave of sin was ever driven to his wickedness as Christ was to His holiness? What force ever drove a selfish man into his indulgence with half the irresistibility that drove the Saviour to the cross? Who does not dream for himself of a freedom as complete and as inspiring as the Lord's? Who does not pray that he too may be ruled by such a sweet despotic law of liberty?

PHILLIPS BROOKS, *The Candle of the Lord*, p. 183.

REFERENCES: ii. 12. — R. Gregory, *Christian World Pulpit*,

vol. xxxii., p. 305; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. v., p. 343; J. Keble, *Sermons for Sundays after Trinity*, Part II., p. 331. ii. 14-17.—T. Hammond, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xii., p. 378. ii. 15.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xviii., No. 1061.

Chap. ii., ver. 18.—"Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works."

I. NOTHING is more evident than that the whole passage now before us is directed against the language in the Epistle to the Romans, as that language was misinterpreted by the wickedness of fanaticism; and that it does not in the slightest degree interfere with it as taken according to the meaning of the writer. The words, "Show me thy faith without thy works," are intended to allude to St. Paul's words that "a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." Taking faith in the sense in which it has often been used since—that is, "correct opinion"—and taking the words, "without the deeds of the law," with nothing further to explain them, and we have at once that most wicked doctrine which St. James condemns, namely, that if a man's opinions about God be right, he need care nothing for his affections and conduct, whereas St. Paul was not speaking of any such belief as was no more than opinion. He did not say that "He who believes in one God is justified," but "He who believes in Jesus Christ is justified," nor, again, did he mean by believing in Jesus Christ believing in such facts about Him as the heathens believed—namely, that there had been such a man crucified in Judæa under Pontius Pilate—but he meant "whosoever believed that Jesus Christ died for his sins"—a thing that never was believed really by any one who did not care for his sins beforehand, and can be really believed by no man without its making him care for his sins a great deal more than he ever cared before.

II. All, then, that St. James says in this passage is that correct opinions will save no man, or, to use the term "faith," not in St. Paul's sense of it, but in the unhappy sense which others have too often attached to it, that a sound faith in religious matters will alone save no man. From the language of two great Apostles, we may surely derive an important lesson, not to make one another offenders for a word. We should not condemn our brother for using words which an apostle has used before him, as he, like the Apostle, may mean no more by them than this, that Christ's people are those only in whom the Spirit of Christ abides.

T. ARNOLD, *Sermons*, vol. vi., p. 269.

Chap. ii., ver. 19.—"Thou believest in one God."

ATHEISM.

I. For the vast majority of mankind, two phenomena have been in all ages, and I believe will be to the end of time, the all-sufficient proof that there is one God. One is the universe; the other is the conscience: one is the starry heaven above; the other is the moral law within. To every good man a true conscience not only tells of a God above us, but is a god within us. It is the categoric imperative which says to a man direct from heaven, "ought" and "must."

II. For nations there can be no morality if they know not God. In a brief tormented existence, ungoverned by any laws save their own appetites, the character of a world deprived of a holy ideal may be summed up in two words: heartless cruelty; unfathomable corruption. I say that any nation which denies God becomes by an invariable law a degraded nation at last, and any age which denies God sinks in great measure into an abominable age. If atheism continues for a time to kindle its dim torches at the fount of life, those torches soon die out in smouldering flames. A nation may walk for a short time in the dubious twilight left on the western hill-tops when the sun is set; but the twilight soon rushes down into the deep, dark night when God is denied, when faith is quenched, when prayer has ceased. It is never long in a nation before the holy warfare of ideas is abandoned for the base conflict of interest, never long before hatred and envy usurp the place of charity, and lust takes the place of honourable love. When once Christianity is dead, the world will be twice dead, a wandering star for which is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.

F. W. FARRAR, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxi., p. 177.

REFERENCE: ii. 24.—F. W. Brown, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 58.

Chap. ii., ver. 26.—"For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."

JUSTIFICATION by Faith.

I. Justification by faith is in fact a doctrine belonging of necessity to all true religion, and not to the Christian religion only. Men speak sometimes as if the Gospel had introduced a method of salvation which is not the completion and perfection of all that went before, but a method utterly opposed to it, as though Abraham and the patriarchs entered heaven by a quite

different door from St. Paul and the members of the Christian Church. But the New Testament teaches differently. St. Paul entirely repudiates the notion of his having made void the law by the doctrine of faith; he shows that the principle which justified Abraham was identical with that which he preaches as the principle of Christian justification, a conclusion which is confirmed by the Old Testament expression that "Abraham believed God, and it" (that is, his *faith*) "was counted unto him for righteousness." If I wanted independent confirmation of St. Paul's doctrine of justification by faith, I would seek it in the confession of any man whose spiritual consciousness was ever so slightly awakened, and who sought, on his knees before God, some communication of the Divine life; and I am sure that the earnestness with which such a man would implore help from above would sufficiently show that no works of man can establish that union with God which is the life of the human soul.

II. When St. Paul wrote with so much earnestness, it was not faith itself for which he was contending so much as for faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as opposed to faith shown in any other way. Who shall say that he put faith before works? He never made the comparison at all. He simply pointed to Christ as the way to the Father, and therefore to union with Christ, or faith in Him, as the only conceivable means of bringing forth fruit to the praise and glory of God.

HARVEY GOODWIN, *Parish Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 198.

REFERENCES: iii. 1-18.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 188. iii. 2.—J. Keble, *Sermons for Christmas and Epiphany*, p. 483; J. H. Thom, *Laws of Life*, vol. i., p. 266; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xv., p. 301. iii. 4.—F. Wagstaff, *Ibid.*, vol. xxii., p. 170. iii. 5.—J. F. Haynes, *Ibid.*, vol. xviii., p. 54; *Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 182; *Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. ii., p. 173. iii. 8.—D. Burns, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xv., p. 101; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 51.

Chap. iii., ver. 17.—"But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."

I. REVEALED truth—the wisdom that is from above—is "first pure, then peaceable." These two constitute a pair; they are connected by a link of peculiar significance and power. God preserves His own purity, and yet lifts the lost into His bosom;

the guilty get a free pardon, and yet the motives which bind them to obedience, instead of being relaxed, are indefinitely strengthened. Revelation is first pure and then peaceable; the Revealer is a just God and Saviour.

II. Revealed truth is gentle and easy to be entreated. This is not the view which springs in nature and prevails in the world. The wisdom that bids an anxious inquirer turn from the Son of God, our Saviour, and pour his confession into a more tender heart, is earthly, sensual, devilish.

III. Revealed truth is full of mercy and good fruits. So far from being in all cases united, these two, in their full dimensions, meet only in the Gospel.

IV. Revealed truth is without partiality and without hypocrisy. It is (1) offered alike to all, and (2) truly offered to each.

W. ARNOT, *Roots and Fruits*, p. 141.

CONSIDER the "wisdom that is from above" in its secondary and subjective aspect, as a lesson printed on the life of believing men by the type of revealed truth, as the image left on human hearts by the seal which came from heaven and pressed them.

I. The new creature, the work of the Spirit in believers, is first pure, then peaceable—(1) in relation to God; (2) in relation to ourselves; (3) in relation to the world around.

II. The new creature is gentle and easy to be entreated. Receiving out of His fulness grace for grace, Christians obtain, among other things, some of the gentleness of Christ. Those who possess any of it long for more. They speak of virtue being its own reward, and this is eminently true of gentleness.

III. The new creature is full of mercy and good fruits. It is a principle of the Gospel that he who gets mercy shows mercy. When a man is full of mercy in this sinning, suffering world, a stream of benevolence will be found flowing in his track all through the wilderness. If the reservoir within his heart be kept constantly charged by union with the upper spring, there need be neither ebbing nor intermission of the current all his days, for opening opportunities everywhere abound.

IV. The new creature is "without partiality and without hypocrisy." (1) Without partiality. It is not the impartiality of indifference, but the impartiality of love. Some people practically discover that to be impartial is an easy attainment. They contrive to care equally for all by caring nothing for any. This is the equality of the grave. Our text describes the impartiality, not of withholding, but of giving. No partiality

for persons, peoples, sins. (2) Without hypocrisy. (*a*) In our intercourse with God; (*b*) in our intercourse with men. In Christians a likeness to Christ's sincerity has been begun; it is their business to hold fast and press on; it is His prerogative to make the likeness perfect in His own time and by His own power.

W. ARNOT, *Roots and Fruits*, p. 155.

REFERENCES: iii. 17.—Bishop Boyd-Carpenter, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 35. iv. 1-3.—*Homilist*, 4th series, vol. i., p. 86. iv. 1-14.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 340. iv. 2, 3.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxviii., No. 1682. iv. 4-12.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 451. iv. 5.—*Ibid.*, vol. iv., p. 332. iv. 7.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxii., No. 1276. iv. 7-10.—*Ibid.*, vol. xxiv., No. 1408; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. x., p. 82.

Chap. iv., vers. 11, 12.

EVIL-SPEAKING.

Part of the Christian life has to do with the tongue, and looking at it in its social aspect, the greatest part. The ways in which the sin forbidden in the text may be committed are legion, and time would fail us in any attempt to give them even the barest enumeration.

I. The first and most absolute form in which we can speak evil of a brother is by uttering against him a wilfully false accusation. One could have wished, for the sake of the honour of our race, that such a deliberate sin had been impossible; but unfortunately it is so common and inveterate that a special law against it was uttered on Sinai, and written on the stony tablet by the finger of God. And of all sinners in the world, the liar is the greatest and the most hopeless. While every sin is bad enough, and needs the special mercy of Heaven for its forgiveness and the special help of Heaven for its cure and abandonment, lying seems to go deeper into the heart and to taint it more thoroughly than any other. And there is this terrible peculiarity about it, that, while it is a sin in itself, it is also a shield for every other sin. Lying often takes the form of evil-speaking; and then you have a double evil, an evil compounded of malice and falsehood. Every stone of falsehood we put into the walls of the temple of truth will crumble; its colour will strike through whatever paint we may put upon it; and the great Architect will have it taken down and replaced by a stone of truth.

II. Another form of evil speaking is that of exaggerating faults that are real. While there has been an immense sacri-

fice of truth, there has been, on the part of the thoughtless romancers, an entire oblivion of the golden law, "Do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you."

III. Another way in which men speak evil one of another is by the unnecessary repetition of real faults. He that is without fault, let him first cast a stone at a faulty man. Of all species of conversation, there is none which is less profitable than that which consists of a morbid dissection of other men's characters.

IV. Another manner in which men speak evil of each other is by a sort of *mock sorrow*. Under the hypocritical guise of pity and abhorrence of sin, they indulge in the mischievous yet too common propensity to publish the failings of some erring brother.

V. Another manner in which men speak evil of each other is by misrepresenting language, motive, or circumstances. The extent to which this special form of evil-speaking goes on is such that it may well create great distrust in any story we hear. Things may sometimes be worse than the rumour, but in the majority of cases I am persuaded they are not half so bad. We are not to speak evil of each other because we are brethren, and because to speak evil of our brother is to speak evil of the law which commands us to love our brother. Let us jealously guard each other's reputations, each looking to it that his reputation shall be worth the guarding.

E. MELLOR, *In the Footsteps of Heroes*, p. 138.

Chap. iv., vers. 13-15.

WHAT is your life?

I. It is a very mysterious part of God's dealings, this making our life so uncertain. If we were not so thoroughly accustomed to the fact, we should, I think, all consider it a very remarkable thing that God should make so much depend on man's life, and yet should leave it so entirely unknown to him how long he will live. A man has a work to do, a great work, a work compared with which everything else he may do is mere trifling, and yet he does not know whether he shall have twenty years to do it in, or ten, or a few months or days.

II. It will throw all the light we require on this difficulty, if we remember one thing: that our state here is one of trial; we are not told to do this thing and that thing so much for their own sakes, as for the sake of seeing whether we will obey God or not. God's creatures must not be independent, but must be

tried and found faithful. No man has any right to say, "Lord, I will follow Thee, but first let me" do my own pleasure. No man may say, I will have my youth to myself, and serve God in my old age. It is an insult to our heavenly Father even to think of such a thing, and therefore what profit would it be to us to know the number of our days, that we might be certain how long we had to live!

III. The truth of the text is the best truth to carry about with us in order to enable us to set things at their right value. If the uncertainty and shortness of life act to make those unhappy who are negligent of the will of God, in the same proportion will it give peace and comfort to the minds of those who do set themselves to do His holy will, for the troubles of life will appear trifling to him who thinks of himself as a traveller on his road home; a person on a journey will put up with many inconveniences, because he says they cannot last long, and home will appear even pleasanter after a rough journey.

HARVEY GOODWIN, *Parish Sermons*, vol. i., p. 257.

REFERENCES: iv. 13-15.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. x., p. 44. iv 13-16.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 99.

Chap. iv., ver. 14.—"What is your life?"

I. FIRST, what is the intention of life? No man of any consideration can look on "this life" for a moment without connecting it with "the life that is to come." It is evident that the first great intention of this "life" is education, so that as in a man's "life" there is a portion upon this earth allotted to what is strictly preparatory to the rest, so is the whole immortal existence of a man arranged that there should be a period of instruction and cultivation, to be the education-time for his eternity. Allowing then that this "life" is education, education is made up of two parts: probation and cultivation. (1) Probation. I mean by that word that a man is to know himself, and to show to other men what he really is. That is probation. For the vindication of God's justice, a man develops in this world; therefore God has placed him for a certain season to show what manner of man he is going to be. The circumstances in which he is put are exactly the best to unfold his character. There is not a point of "life" in which there is not a probationary intention. (2) Education is also cultivation. Partly by instilling knowledge, but still more by drawing out powers, by establishing good habits and

exercising right feelings, a child is educated for his after-life. Just such is all the machinery which surrounds us in our present state. Every variety of fortune, every little minute occurrence of life, the Bible, the Holy Spirit, the very Atonement itself, are all calculated to train; they are all means to an end.

II. But now I pass to the second thought which lies coiled up in the great question, "What is life?"—its duration. At the most a span; and that span is held by a thread. There is no certainty of "to-morrow," and many years are out of the question. And, with the "angel of death" thus in the air, can you sit down at your pleasures, and no "blood," on "the door"? If that "blood" is once there, upon your heart, which is a man's "door," the "door" of his existence, if "the blood of Christ" has ever been applied, everything is changed, age is happy, death is joy.

III. What is the real nature of "life"? All "life" is in the Father. Therefore he only "lives" who is united to the Father, and no man is united to the Father but by the power of "the blood of Jesus." Therefore "the blood of Jesus" is the essence of "life."

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 4th series, p. 107.

Chap. iv., ver. 14.—"For what is your life? It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."

THERE is no topic, I suppose, on which we are all so heartily agreed as that of the uncertainty of human life, and yet perhaps there is no topic, unanimous as our agreement about it may be, which produces so little effect upon character and conduct.

I. The sacred writer of the text, a man of a very practical turn of mind, is speaking of the habit in which some persons indulge of laying their plans for the future without any reference whatever to the Divine goodwill and pleasure. They arrange, he says, a long course of procedure, extending over many weeks or even months; they calculate the steps they will take, the transactions in which they will engage, the bargains they will strike, and all as if they were perfectly certain of a continuance of life. But is this wise or right? It is neither. It is foolish and wicked. These persons are feeling and acting as if they were masters of the situation and could command from God a prolongation of existence until their work was done, whereas such is the uncertainty of life that they positively cannot reckon upon what a single day will bring

forth. St. James would be the last man to condemn a reasonable foresight. He well knew that we must look forward, must provide, must lay plans for the future. It is not this that he condemns. But the thing which he visits with the severity of his denunciation is the practical leaving of God out of His own world and the practical taking of the management of affairs into our own hands, which is implied in all confident reckoning upon the continuance of life.

II. Consider the importance of the life which we are now living in the flesh when regarded as determining our future destiny for incalculable ages. Its very uncertainty is part of the merciful Divine plan for making us thoughtful. The uncertainty is the very thing we want for rousing us to earnest seeking after salvation. When we feel it is probable that we shall continue to live, and yet possible that we may die at any time, we are in the very best state of mind for attending to religion.

G. CALTHROP, *Penny Pulpit*, New Series, No. 899.

REFERENCES: iv. 14.—E. Carr Glyn, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 49; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxx., No. 1773; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iii., p. 351. iv. 17.—J. H. Thom, *Laws of Life*, 2nd series, p. 91. v. 7.—J. M. Neale, *Sermons for the Church Year*, vol. i., p. 25; H. P. Liddon, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxiv., p. 385; *Homiletic Magazine*, vol. vii., p. 340.

Chap. v., vers. 7, 8.—"Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord."

THE lesson of Advent is a twofold one. It is a lesson of watchfulness; it is also a lesson of patience. They are the two contrasted tones heard all through that solemn discourse upon the Mount of Olives from which, as "in a glass, darkly," through parable and figure, we have learned all that we can ever learn of that—

"Far-off Divine event
To which the whole creation moves."

I. Patience is a lesson which we all need. We need it in the heat and eagerness of youth; we need it in the more firmly held purposes and severer tempers of manhood; we need it in forming our opinions and in ordering our lives, in judging our friends, in judging our enemies, in judging ourselves; we need it in our selfish plans and in our unselfish ones also. Impatience wears many disguises. It is indeed nearly related to several virtues; but the near relations of

virtues are often not virtues themselves. To one it bears the appearance of frankness, which says out what others feel, which has no time or care to soften wholesome, if unpleasant, truth; to another it seems like proper spirit, resenting what should be resented, chafing at officious criticism, claiming a man's freedom in thinking and judging; to still another it seems the expression of energy, or zeal, or fearlessness, pushing on when others hesitate, making light of imaginary obstacles, so intent on a great end as to have no time for minute consideration of the means. In the smallest spheres of life, in little societies, in the family, in the individual soul, impatience destroys peace, takes its happiness from effort, wears out prematurely hearts which, if this poison were absent, would bear and do great things in God's service.

II. I suggest three points in respect of which especially the New Testament bids us connect the lesson of patience with the thoughts of the Second Advent: (1) Judging. "Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come." "Let your moderation" (your fairness, largeness, gentleness of judging) "be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand." Our Lord puts it in one word, not as a counsel of perfection, not as what in all cases we can actually do, but as an aim, an ideal, a warning: "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged." We should make allowance, look always on the best side, hope all things, believe all things. "He hath committed all judgment unto the Son, because He is the Son of man." (2) Bearing. Think how many times in the Epistles we hear the words "patience," "endurance," and almost always in the context, either in word or in thought, is the remembrance of this limit, this great hope, in which men can stand firm. Our trials are very various; they vary with our years, our circumstances, our temperament. "The heart knoweth its own bitterness," but the great sweetener to all may be the thought that God knows it too; that He is disciplining us for the day when He comes to "restore all things," to "bind up the broken-hearted," when "all sorrow and sighing shall flee away." (3) Waiting. "O tarry thou the Lord's leisure," sings the Psalmist; "the patient waiting for Christ," is St. Paul's last word to the Thessalonians. Both of them knew that to anxious and eager hearts it was one of the hardest of lessons; but peace cannot be had unless it be learnt, nor true strength.

E. C. WICKHAM, *Wellington College Sermons*, p. 278.

REFERENCES: v. 7, 8.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xvii., No. 1025; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 308; *Ibid.*,

vol. xiv., p. 88; E. H. Palmer, *Ibid.*, p. 269. v. 7 11.—*Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. i., p. 86. v. 11.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxxi., No. 1845; J. B. Brown, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 376; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 269; vol. iii., pp. 287, 326.

Chap. v., ver. 11.—"The Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy."

NOTE—

I. The character here given to God: "The Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy." (1) "Pitiful." Pity is a feeling for, a feeling with, the distressed. The pity of God is of high quality and eminent degree. (2) "Of tender mercy." It is kindness to the sinful, to the guilty and undeserving and ill-deserving. *Tender* mercy is mercy easily excited, not like a flow of water produced by machinery, but like a stream of water from a spring or well. The merciful Father is of *tender mercy*, and the tenderness of that mercy has *not* been produced by Christ; it is, on the other hand, expressed and manifested by Christ.

II. The character manifested. Observe the unfolding of this beauteous and glorious character. God has a purpose in all the afflictions of His saints, which when developed reveals God as very pitiful and of tender mercy. (1) Here, then, is something to believe. (2) Here is something to be ultimately seen: the end of the Lord. To be seen, there is the coming out of tribulation; to be seen, the being better and more happy for that tribulation; the comparison between the sufferings of the present time and the glory revealed; the light and transient appearance of affliction when in conjunction with an eternal weight of glory; the high purpose and supreme wisdom of God in the suffering of affliction; the end seen to be better than the beginning; and God proved, demonstrated, to be "very pitiful and of tender mercy."

S. MARTIN, *Comfort in Trouble*, p. 28.

Chap. v., ver. 13.—"Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms."

RELIGIOUS Worship a Remedy for Excitements.

St. James seems to imply in these words that there is that in religious worship which supplies all our spiritual need, which suits every mood of mind and every variety of circumstances, over and above the heavenly and supernatural assistance which we are allowed to expect from it. Prayer and praise seem in his view to be a universal remedy, a panacea, as it is called,

which ought to be used at once, whatever it be that affects us. Excitements are the indisposition of the mind; and of these excitements in different ways the services of Divine worship are the proper antidotes. How they are so shall now be considered.

I. Excitements are of two kinds: secular and religious. First, let us consider secular excitements. Such is the pursuit of gain, or of power, or of distinction. A man may live from week to week in the fever of a decent covetousness, to which he gives some more specious names, till the heart of religion is eaten out of him. One very momentous use of prayer and praise with all of us is that it breaks the current of worldly thoughts. Our daily prayer morning and evening suspends our occupations of time and sense, and especially the prayers of the Church do this. The weekly services of prayer and praise come to us as a gracious relief, a pause from the world, a glimpse of the third heaven, lest the world should rob us of our hope and enslave us to that hard master who is plotting our eternal destruction.

II. Next, let us consider how religious excitements are set right by the same Divine medicine. Is any one desirous of gaining comfort to his soul, of bringing Christ's presence home to his very heart, and of doing the highest and most glorious thing for the whole world? Let him praise God; let David's holy Psalter be as familiar words in his mouth, his daily service, ever repeated, yet ever new and ever sacred; let him pray: especially let him intercede. Few are rich; few can suffer for Christ; all may pray. Other men will not pray for themselves; you may pray for them and for the general Church; and while you pray, you will find enough in the defects of your praying to remind you of your own nothingness and to keep you from pride while you aim at perfection.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 336

Chap. v., vers. 13-16.

THE Visitation of the Sick.

I. To understand the clause which refers to anointing with oil, it must be remembered that in those early and simple days, when little was known about the structure of the human frame, and the healing art resolved itself very much into a rude kind of surgery, oil was regarded as a great restorative—as, indeed, it is now—and as the best form of medicine. In the Old

Testament, Isaiah speaks of wounds and bruises which have never been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment; and in the New Testament, when the good Samaritan bound up the wounds of the traveller to Jericho, he gave oil as a medicine, and wine. Hence the application of oil is here prescribed possibly as the means which it might please God to bless to the sick man's recovery, possibly only as a symbol of that recovery; but whether it be the prescribed means or symbol, no greater perversion of a Scriptural passage can be imagined than that which has found here a warrant for what Romanists call "extreme unction," that is, anointing, as a religious ceremonial, a patient who is given over by a physician and about to die. While we pray for the recovery of our sick friend, we must at the same time remember that Almighty God works by means, and apply to the patient the remedies which a medical man prescribes; in a word, modern medicine, of whatsoever kind it be, corresponds to the ancient oil.

II. "If we have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him." The Apostle naturally means, if in respect to his particular sickness he have committed sins. In a general sense we have all committed sins, and it is perfectly true that there is a deep connection between sin and disease; but at the same time it cannot be said of a particular case of sickness that the patient is suffering for his own sins.

III. Visitation of the sick may be made in the way of fraternal sympathy, as well as of ministerial duty. That gracious acknowledgment of the King in the day of final account, "I was sick, and ye visited Me," will surely not be made to the clergy only, but to all who have brought the accents of sympathy and the consolations of religion to the bedside of the sick and suffering.

E. M. GOULBURN, *Penny Pulpit*, New Series, No. 241.

REFERENCE: v. 14.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 132.

Chap. v., ver. 15.—"The prayer of faith shall save the sick.'

AMONG all the trials of life there is no occasion when we more deeply feel the need of God's helping hand than when brought low by sickness ourselves, or when we tremble for the life of some member of our household or a near and valued friend. Unwavering confidence in God inspires the belief that whatever is really for the best our gracious Father will be sure to grant.

I. We should always be humble in our prayers. Doubtless

many a petition is rejected by a higher tribunal for lack of humility in the hearts of those who presented it.

II. Importunate earnestness is another characteristic of successful prayer, if, at the same time, we have the spirit of submission to the wisdom of our heavenly Father.

J. N. NORTON, *Every Sunday*, p. 351.

Chap. v., ver. 16.—"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

THE Strength of Working Prayer.

I. The praying. It is not said "the prayer." And the difference is worth observing. If it were said "the prayer," it might seem as if the words of the prayer were like a charm, such as we read of in ancient fables, when some particular words repeated by any person are spoken of as able to produce some wonderful effect, so that, whoever uses them, they are regarded as equally powerful, the power, some mysterious imaginary power, being in the words themselves. It is the praying—the constant, earnest praying of the heart, not without words, no doubt, at least in general, but the constant, earnest praying of the heart—to which the effect is attributed by St. James.

II. It is the praying of a righteous man, not anybody's praying. St. James is speaking of the continuous heart-praying of the man who, clinging to the righteousness which has been won for him in Christ, is earnestly bent on rendering to God in his own body, soul, and spirit, by the help of the Holy Ghost, the offering of a righteous and saintly life. That is the sort of man of whose praying the Apostle speaks.

III. That sort of praying by that sort of man is a very strong thing. It is stronger than the wind, stronger than the earthquake, stronger than the sea, stronger than anything in the world; for God is moved by it, and He moves all creation at His pleasure.

IV. Its strength lies in the energy of its working; it sets on foot a mighty system of energies. The angels of God exult, the souls of men are wrought upon, the course of human events is guided, the grace of God is won, the Holy Spirit of God is abundantly poured out, by the secret incessant working of the mighty spiritual power that belongs to the "praying of the righteous man."

G. MOBERLY, *Parochial Sermons*, p. 225.

FERVENT Prayer.

Intercessory prayer is but one part of the great system of intercession on which human life is organised. Intercession—it is simply a "coming in between." We know the word well in Roman political history as the tribune's veto. In its widest sense it may be applied to every act in which one human being is able to come in between another and some evil that might befall him. Nay, we may extend it even more widely still to the whole principle of mediation, by which one man is used to convey blessings to another. As it was with our Lord, so it is with the Church which He founded to represent Him when He should be gone. Its whole existence is one living act of intercession. Always and everywhere the Church is an intercessor; it is the expression of the mind of the Paraclete, standing by its very existence between God and the world, standing between the world and the forces of evil which threaten it. Intercessory prayer is but the expression of its intercessory life. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, that interdependence of man on man which is seen in the actions of daily life finds a new sphere of operations in our prayers. Not merely the actions, not merely the character and influence, but also the praying, of a righteous man becomes a great force.

I. It is a great force, first, because it forces us to keep up a true *ideal* of what those for whom we pray may be. It makes us, in George Macdonald's striking phrase, "think of them and God together." If I pray for any one, that implies that I have faith in him, that I believe he may be better than he is. Which of us does not know what a power for good this is? To know that some one does believe in us, that some one, knowing all our weakness, yet does believe that we can conquer our temptations; to be with some one who expects us to be better, *this*, even if it comes from those who have never knelt in prayer for us—this is an effectual intercession.

II. Intercession is, again, a great force because it pledges us to do the best we can for those for whom we pray. We cannot, in very shame, ask God to help those whom we are refusing to help ourselves when that help lies in our power; the very fact of intercession reminds us of the truth of the dependence of man upon man. We ask God to bless those for whom we care, and again and again He reminds us that His blessings are given through men, and the answer to our prayer is that we are sent on an errand of mercy.

III. Intercession is also such a great force because it brings

into action the power of God, just as the tribune's veto would have had no force if it had been spoken by him on his own responsibility. It was strong because armed with the strength of law; it was strong not with the strength of even a Tiberius Gracchus, but with the power of a sacrosanct authority: so our prayers are strong because they have the promise and the power of Christ behind them.

W. Lock, *Sermon Year Book*, vol. i., p. 1.

References: v. 17.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. v., p. 96. v. 17, 18.—J. Davis, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxvii., p. 214.

Chap. v., vers. 19, 20.

Means of Salvation.

I. Let us see what character consists of, and then we may see where and in what way it may be changed. First of all, there is the character we bring with us into this world, which we call our nature; and then there is that second nature which education and habit impart. Christian divines in all times have taught that man comes into this world with a decided character, bent, or bias; they call it human depravity, and they account for it by original sin: and modern science is equally strong in maintaining that man comes into this world with the shaping influence of the past upon him and a depravity inherited from savage or animal ancestors. Anyhow here is the fact: a man comes into this world a positive and decided kind of being, with a nature of a fixed quality and texture, a nature which is a kind of concrete, a fusing together of all sorts of broken fragments and dust of the past, or, to take a more living illustration, a soul with all sorts of buried seeds in it.

II. Conduct in the long run modifies character, especially that product of habit which we call second nature. By not doing a thing for a certain time a man cares less about doing it, his health is better, his courage higher, his pleasure with others increased, his self-respect more ample. The old taste begins to decay. A joyful audacity fills the eye which once had a suspicious, hunted look. New habits and tastes are gradually formed. In other words, a new character arises from changed circumstances, from a changed condition of things. Leave men, in all which surrounds them and acts upon them, in precisely the same state, without the smallest change, and they must remain the same. They must be brought into contact with new powers, new saving forces, if they are to be renewed

in the spirit of their minds. But since they cannot change themselves, but must be what they are, change must be thrust upon them; their salvation must be directly set up by a power outside themselves; they need a Saviour. This is the Divine law, and its great manifestation was the Son of God, who was Son of man, who is the perfect illustration of God's dealings with man, the fulness of the Godhead bodily. He came to men, who without Him must have remained dead in trespasses and sins, and started them from the grave into newness of life.

W. PAGE ROBERTS, *Liberalism in Religion*, p. 147.

DANGER and Effort.

I. There is, first, individual danger: the danger of erring from the truth. The danger may be either intellectual or moral, either the darkening of the understanding, or the corrupting of the heart. The allusion evidently is to one who, having known the truth, had departed from its safe and pleasant paths, and had come under the entanglements either of erroneous notions or of vicious life. And the twofold danger is in existence still. Moral error is, I need scarcely re mind you, more imminent and more disastrous than the other. It is quite possible to hold erroneous opinions in connection with a large charity. Wood, hay, and stubble are sometimes built with as clumsy materials on the true foundation; but where the danger is not intellectual, but moral, there is of necessity present alienation from God and the prospect of perpetual exile from the glory of His power. Heresy is not a trifling thing; it is to be resisted and deplored: but the deadliest heresy is sin, and there is danger in a world where every influence is a temptation, and where every passion is a tempter.

II. Take, next, the thought of individual effort: "If *one* convert him." There is here a distinct recognition of the influence of mind over mind, that principle of dependence and of oversight which is involved in our mutual relationship as members of one family. Not the least of the endowments which make up our solemn stewardship is this mysterious and inseparable power of influence, one of the most important talents entrusted to us, and of which we shall have to give account at the judgment-seat of God. It is of universal bestowment; we are none of us without it. Your sphere is narrow, you say; your influence is small; you can do nothing for

Christ. One acorn is a very insignificant thing, but the majestic oak is its development of strength; one little rippling wavelet makes no account, but it is carried to the springtide, and the springtide were not perfect without it; one raindrop is hardly noticed as it falls, but it is enough for one rosebud's life to make it blow. There is not one of you, however small and scanty and narrow your influence, who may not, by patient and prayerful toil, become a wise winner of souls.

W. M. PUNSHON, *Penny Pulpit*, Nos. 3674, 3675.

REFERENCES: v. 19, 20.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. i., No. 45; vol. xix., No. 1137; *Homilist*, vol. iv., p. 332; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol i., p. 251. v. 20.—J. Keble, *Sermons on Various Occasions*, p. 156.

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